

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

THE CHANGING ROLE OF
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND THROUGH
THE USE OF ITS COMMUNITY BUILDINGS:
NEWHAM 1945-2010

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requirements of Anglia Ruskin University
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ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY
ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND THROUGH THE USE OF ITS
COMMUNITY BUILDINGS: NEWHAM 1945-2010

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This thesis seeks to re-examine theories of religious decline in the inner-city. From Edward Wickham (*Church and People in an Industrial City*) to Callum Brown (*The Death of Christian Britain*), decline and death have defined inner-city Christianity. In the late twentieth century the Church of England in Newham began a process of renewal by creating combined churches and community centres in a number of its parishes. Examining the motivation behind these projects creates a more nuanced understanding of the present secularization debate.

Four churches were chosen that underwent this process to reflect the diversity and complexity of this approach. This work draws on minutes, reports, newspapers, interviews and oral histories.

This is a study of how one area of East London renewed itself, inspired by the theological approach of J. G. Davies and his followers. Far from discovering the Church in its death knell, evidence emerges of an energetic, highly motivated Christian community, able to draw funds and expertise into this process of renewal. The Church of England is still willing to reassert its mission to the inner-city and expand its sphere of influence to encompass communal activities in a process of reclaiming a role within Newham life.

The Anglican Church has defied notions of decline and secularization, and this study reveals an inner-city part of London that has a thriving religious culture. The renewal of its buildings has enabled the church to carve a role out within the community that ensure it remains positive, financially stable and numerically more resilient than its suburban neighbours. This suggests that the predictions of the death of Christian Britain are premature in this instant and arguments about decline have to be further evaluated in the light of this study.

Four key words:

Secularization, Theology, Community, Church.

The changing role of the Church of England through the use of its community buildings: Newham 1945-2010

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Abbreviations.

AA	Alcoholics Anonymous
APEC	Architects, Planners, and Ecclesiastical Consultants
ARCIC	Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission
BT	British Telecom
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CTWS	Canning Town Women's Settlement
CUF	Church Urban Fund
DBF	Diocesan Board of Finance
DCC	District Church Council
ECRO	Essex County Records Office
Fig	Figure
GLC	Greater London Council
GP	General Practitioner
GPs	General Practitioners
HMQ	Her Majesty the Queen
ICI	Imperial Chemical Industries
LBC	London Broadcasting Corporation
LBN	London Borough of Newham
LCC	London County Council
LDDC	London Dockland Development Corporation
LEP	Local Ecumenical Project
LOB	London Over the Border
LWT	London Weekend Television
MA	Master of Arts
MP	Member of Parliament
NCRP	Newham Community Renewal Programme
NCRPA	Newham Community Renewal Programme Archive
NHS	National Health Service
No.	Number
org.	organization
PCC	Parochial Church Council
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
SBCA	St Bartholomew's Church Archive
SBDSC	St Bartholomew's Development Sub-Committee
SCM	Student Christian Movement
SLSA	Stratford Local Studies Archive
SMFGCA	St Mark's Forest Gate Church Archive
SMLICA	St Michael's Little Ilford Church Archive

SPCK	Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge
SS	Steam Ship
TV	Television
UK	United Kingdom
UPA	Urban Priority Area
URC	United Reformed Church
VAT	Value Added Tax
WCC	World Council of Churches
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

In loving memory of my Father and Mother,
William and Mary Brown.
Born and brought up in Stratford.

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Introduction.

**John Gordon Davies 1919-1990
Cadbury Professor of Theology Birmingham University.**

Introduction:

The historian of religion in the British Isles faces a considerable problem when examining its impact from the nineteenth century onwards. There had been an accepted narrative from this period of constant and discernible decline that had conquered the soul of the nation, which sociologists termed secularization. Despite valiant efforts, it was claimed that the Church failed to check this decline. There was a growing anxiety amongst the middle classes that organized religion seemed most alienated from the industrial, urban working-class. Quoting the words of Horace Mann:

...the melancholy fact is thus impressed upon our notice that the classes which are most in need of the restraints and consolation of religion are the classes which are most without them.¹

Mann's religious census of 1851 became a milestone on the journey of plotting the rise of secularization in Britain.² Yet concerns over piety had been acknowledged before this. The social commentator Henry Mayhew drew attention to the ignorance and irreligion of the poorest in urban Britain.³ Whatever the truth of such research, the middle classes readily accepted the notion that the industrial poor were godless.⁴ There was a tendency to paint a lurid picture of the 'jungle' that was the inner-city to justify the sometimes limited achievements of missionaries.⁵ The aristocratic Albert Victor Baillie served his curacy in Tyne Dock in the 1880s and spiced his autobiography with encounters with

¹ Horace Mann, *Census of Great Britain, 1851 Religious Worship in England and Wales Annotated from the Official Report made by Horace Mann, Esq. to George Graham, Esq. Registrar General* (London: George Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1854), p. 93.

² C. John Sommerville suggests a much earlier genesis for secularization in Britain with a substantial change in attitude at the Reformation. Significantly, for this thesis he argues the radical iconoclasm of the sixteenth century points to a sea change in attitudes. Certainly one can say with some confidence that the seeds were sown here but much of what he argues is evidence for secularization may well be the repositioning of the sacred in other spheres of life, not least the family and home. C. John Sommerville, *The Secularization of Early Modern England: From Religious Culture to Religious Faith* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 84.

³ Henry Mayhew, *London Labour, and the London Poor* (London: George Woodfall and Sons, 1851), Vol I, p. 21.

⁴ Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding secularisation 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 21.

⁵ F. H. Wintmore recording his experience at the London City Mission in *The Salvation of London* (London: The London City Mission, 1959), p. 11.

knife-wielding drunks.⁶ Certainly, it was the Victorian age that articulated these fears of decline in a way that previous generations had not.⁷ Much of this concern centred on the definition the nineteenth century elite had prescribed for religious identity, a highly prescriptive personal piety.⁸ Yet it was not true that the nineteenth century Church stagnated. The energy and activity of the Victorians in the field of urban mission was considerable.⁹ In West Essex between 1850 and 1904 there were nine Anglican churches established as well as four mission halls in East Ham and twenty-four churches and seventeen mission halls in West Ham, all carved out of the three original medieval parishes.¹⁰ Despite this, commentators within and outside the Church readily accepted that it was possible to plot a slow and steady decline in religious adherence. The pessimistic view argued that decline in faith ran in tandem with the industrial age.¹¹

By the Edwardian period some clergy seemed to have abandoned hope of making significant inroads into working-class communities.¹² So persuasive was this approach that later writers, sympathetic to the manufacturing poor, contributed to this assumption that religion had only the most superficial of claims on proletarian minds. Jonathan Rose, in *The Intellectual Life of the British Working-Classes* (2002), could only present examples of people's access to the Bible as escapism or a ripping yarn.¹³ Historians seemed to be content to accept this hypothesis as an adequate means of charting the evident secularization of the developed western world.

The conviction about decline was linked to a growing industrial, urban world that was presented as modern and enlightened (a term itself that was to become descriptive of an

⁶ Albert Victor Baillie, *My First Eighty Years 1864-1944* (London: John Murray, 1951), p. 83.

⁷ Callum G. Brown suggests that for the Victorians, religion could be rationalised, defined and examined and in so doing reduced it to a set of propositions that excluded particular social groups' participation in the phenomenon. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 33.

⁸ Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 37.

⁹ Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 10.

¹⁰ Richard Mudie-Smith, Ed. *The Religious Life of London*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), p. 352 and p. 357.

¹¹ Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 10.

¹² Jeffrey Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth, 1870-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 32.

¹³ Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working-Classes* (London: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 102, p. 350.

age when religion was thought to be first in decline), and a past that was identified as archaic, irrelevant and superstitious. This simplistic view was itself indicative of a mentality that did not feel that any more complex an explanation was necessary to analyse such a significant shift in the West's cultural identity. Yet so persuasive was this theory of religious decline stemming from industrialization that no significant challenge to it was mounted for over a century. Ironically, this came in the 1960s at a point when there was not just evidence of religion's decline, but for some, real proof of its collapse in British society. It seemed that only in the light of that genuine crisis could the achievements of the past be realistically assessed.

There was now a growing mythic dimension created to express the animosity between science, technology, capitalism (the modern age), and faith. Milestones in this narrative included the debate between Darwinian rationalism and Anglican ignorance epitomised in the conflict between Huxley and Wilberforce at Oxford.¹⁴ Authors such as Owen Chadwick presented a case for a growing distrust of religion in the academic world in the late nineteenth century.¹⁵ So complete was this perception of decline that Rex Walford indicated that historians assumed the Church of England was no longer worthy of serious academic study in this period.¹⁶ This narrative also depended on the assumption the Church was either indolent or impotent in its resistance to secularization.

Despite the efforts of the Victorian Church the crisis of decline seemed to be encapsulated by the Church's experiences after the First World War. The destruction of an old established order, the perceived rise in a hedonistic culture exemplified by cinema and a new affluence amongst the working class further indicated the Church was losing its grip on the nation.¹⁷ Moreover, it was the upper middle classes who were now drifting

¹⁴ Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Canto edition, 1990), p. 161.

¹⁵ Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind*, p. 186.

¹⁶ Rex Walford, "As by magic"; the growth of 'New London' north of the Thames 1918-1945 and the response of the Church of England' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Anglia Polytechnic University, 2003), p. 2.

¹⁷ K. S. Inglis, *Churches and the Working-Classes in Victorian England* (London: Kegan Paul, 1963), p. 334ff.

from church attendance because of alternative leisure pursuits.¹⁸ This was not helped by the fact that the hoped-for better age encapsulated in the phrase ‘a land fit for heroes’ had never materialized in the interwar years and, alongside it, an anticipated religious revival proved equally illusory.

Some clergy thought the activities of the Church were now peripheral to British society by the 1920s.¹⁹ Even for sympathetic commentators, it was hard not to view the Church of the past as set within a golden age of power and influence in marked contrast to its present sorry state. Cyril Garbett, reflecting on the relationship between Church and State in the early 1950s, contrasted the devotion of past generations with the frivolity of his age.²⁰ Ironically, the Church of England’s contact with ordinary men during the Great War indicated other sources of religious expression and a manifest faith amongst the populace, although one that did not wear the cloak of orthodoxy.²¹

Yet, at the end of the nineteenth century, there was to be a significant shift in attitude towards the urban working-class that would have implications for the supposed failure of Christian mission in the city. Past inability to make inroads into the irreligion of the working-class was often explained in terms of this class’ stubborn resistance to religion.²² Blame was placed squarely at the door of the poor. The closing decades of the century were to see a significant reassessment of poor people by the middle classes.²³ Instead of something to be feared they became a class to be pitied. It was the harshness of their lives that hindered their conversion.²⁴ Works such as Andrew Mearns’ *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* (1883), General Booth’s *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890), and Charles Booth’s mammoth survey of poverty and wealth in the capital helped shape a changing attitude to the poor.²⁵ A growing sense that the Church itself was to blame for

¹⁸ Hugh McLeod, *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City* (London: Croom Helm, 1974), p. 235.

¹⁹ Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society*, p. 273.

²⁰ Cyril Garbett, *Church and State in England* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1950), p. 308.

²¹ Alan Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War* (London: SPCK, 1978), p. 195.

²² Inglis, *Churches and the Working-Classes*, p. 1.

²³ Inglis, *Churches and the Working-Classes*, p. 21.

²⁴ Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society*, p. 105.

²⁵ Andrew, Mearns, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London: an inquiry into the condition of the abject poor* (London: James Clark, 1883), William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (London:

such a failure to touch the lives of ordinary people became prevalent at the beginning of the new century.²⁶

Tracing the history of this period, fifty years later, Edward Wickham, working as an industrial missionary in Sheffield, felt it was the Church that had failed to connect with the new industrial class. In his influential work, *Church and People in an Industrial City* (1957), a narrative was developed that seemed to explain that it was not that the Church of England had lost the poor; it had never had them.²⁷ It had failed to bridge significantly the class divide to connect with the working-classes. His research was, in turn, supported by the work of K. S. Inglis, whose *Churches and the Working-Classes in Victorian England* (1963), presented a similar conclusion. Crucially, Wickham's theory was felt to be not just a condemnation of the Church of England's past efforts but a fresh challenge to redouble its endeavours in the inner-city. Class was to become a pivotal tool in assessing secularization in Britain. Ironically, Wickham was presenting the urban masses as irreligious which would have been a familiar analysis to his Victorian contemporaries.

The complexity of class and religion

This assumption of a steady decline due to industrialization was to hold sway until the early 1970s when one of the first expressions of dissent, Hugh McLeod's *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City* (1974), suggested an alternative reading of secularization. Drawing on a bottom up approach to history, McLeod wished to challenge the assumption of the secularization theory that the urban, industrial working-classes were most resistant to religious influences and suggested a more nuanced approach to what constituted piety and religious identity in Victorian society. For McLeod, class was an overriding arbiter of faith. He challenged the assumption that there was a single monolithic group tightly bound by social, economic and cultural ties called the working-class. The reality of life in the nineteenth century city was one of subtle shades of classification. These substrata each responded to organized religion in differing ways. In

McCorquodale and Co, 1890), and Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the people in London*. Vol. 1-17 (London: MacMillan and Co, 1902-03).

²⁶ Mearns, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*, p. 3.

²⁷ Edward Wickham, *Church and People in an Industrial City* (London: Lutterworth, 1957), p. 150.

contrasting Bethnal Green and Lewisham, McLeod found antipathy towards organized religion amongst some of the working-classes was common but atheism rare.²⁸ His research revealed there were some working-class communities actively engaged with Nonconformist chapels that rejected notions of apathy from this class as a whole.

This work was the precursor to a series of books that sought to reassess this impact of secularization. Each engaged the subject by concentrating on a clearly defined geographical and political area and within a given time frame, concentrating on the role class played in shaping organized religion. Jeffrey Cox's study of Lambeth was the most groundbreaking as he highlighted the significance of female participation as a defining characteristic of some urban working-class religion.²⁹ The vicarious nature of this enabled men in a household to feel they belonged to a particular denomination because their mothers, wives or sisters participated in its life. Sarah Williams further suggests that children had a role to play in this as they were regularly sent to Sunday School and children's church.³⁰ This offers some explanation as to why early morning services, such as those introduced at Emmanuel, Forest Gate in the 1880s were so popular. A proportion of the female members of the parish attended early in the morning services to offer a clear day to prepare the Sunday lunch for the family. A similar phenomenon was noted by Cox in Lambeth.³¹ Working-class religion in places like Lambeth indicated a vibrant piety amongst the poor. This may have only occasionally inter-connected with mainstream denominations, as in the case of rites of passage, but it was no less a devout expression of faith.³² Cox meticulously examined a wealth of activities the churches were involved in that touched the lives of many more people than attended on a Sunday, from political rallying, social outreach and recreation.³³ Hugh McLeod in *Religion and Society in England, 1850-1914* (1996), using the Essex University oral history archive, revealed a surprisingly high involvement that working class families had with organized religion.³⁴

²⁸ McLeod, *Class and Religion*, p. 50.

²⁹ Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society*, p. 26.

³⁰ Sarah Williams, *Religious Belief and Popular Culture in Southwark c.1880-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 126.

³¹ Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society*, p. 25f.

³² Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society*, p. 98.

³³ Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society*, pp. 21, 23, 58, 83 and 160.

³⁴ Hugh McLeod, *Religion and Society in England, 1850-1914* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996).

As one of the few respected professionals who lived in a working-class community clergy acted as referees for the poor when seeking employment.³⁵ He added further to the debate by exploring the religious identity of working people in Europe in *Piety and Poverty Working Class Religion in Berlin, London and New York 1870-1914* (1996), and *Religion and the People of Western Europe 1789-1989* (1997). Again he noted that at times political consciousness was aided by religion, through denominations like the Primitive Methodist. Some subsections of urban working-class people accessed religion on their own highly political terms.³⁶ The evidence McLeod presented suggested social divisions and the stratification of the modern city had a greater part to play in working-class alienation from religion than industrialization.³⁷ Not all working-class communities throughout Europe were resistant to religion. Indeed, London was almost unique in its plethora of denominations that contributed to the influence organized religion could wield over the poor.³⁸

This encouraged further investigation into local communities that bore much fruit, challenging the assumptions of decline and absence of faith amongst the urban working-class. Sarah Williams drew on a unique archive of religious charms and talismans in conjunction with testimonies from oral history, to explore the religious expression of Southwark between 1880 and 1939. This revealed a ready market for such objects in people's homes and attitudes to the sacral that doggedly survived the modern era.³⁹ This anonymous piety was evident in East London in the case of a Manor Park Coalman who said a prayer at the top of his stairs every day before he went to work, although he had no time for organized religion.⁴⁰ This hitherto under-examined archive indicated a significant need for an appeal to divine forces at times of crisis or change. Conventional religiosity was renegotiated to accommodate orthodox beliefs within a wider community

³⁵ William George Perry, *A West Ham Life: William George Perry An Autobiography* (London: Parent's Centre Publication, 1984), p. 17.

³⁶ Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe 1789-1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 123, 125.

³⁷ Hugh McLeod, *Piety and Poverty Working-Class Religion in Berlin, London and New York 1870-1914* (London: Holmes and Meire, 1996), p. 103.

³⁸ McLeod, *Piety and Poverty*, p. 32.

³⁹ Williams, *Religious Belief and Popular Culture*, p. 6.

⁴⁰ Part of the author's personal experience.

theology.⁴¹ What they did not indicate was a habitual need for the ministrations of organized religion or the requirement of a public sacred space, much less involvement by an ordained minister.⁴² They were at times independent of orthodox religion. Interestingly, what seems to be evident was a religious dimension that was individualistic and highly personal which did chime with the anomie of modern urban life.⁴³ Moreover, to many Christians this diffuse religion smacked of superstition. It reflected the ultimate powerlessness of people's lives in the face of a hostile world. Religion was less about giving meaning to life and more about protecting people from its vicissitudes.

Yet even working class participation in mainstream religion seems to have been under valued. More positively, authors, such as Jeremy Morris on Croydon, Mark Smith on Oldham, and S. J. D. Green on Yorkshire, all revealed more evidence of working-class participation in church life in these urbanized industrial centres than originally assumed.⁴⁴ For them there was a growing body of evidence regarding church attendance, again particularly through oral testimony, that suggested the churches were at the very least keeping pace with population growth up to the end of the 1880s.⁴⁵ This further weakened the case for causal links between industrialization and decline. This could be indicative of official records failing to note working class religiosity that is only revealed by an appeal to direct testimony.

Scholars felt that a specific date for decline would aid in the diagnosis of its causes. This meant that the start of decline was to be regularly revised in the light of fresh evidence, from the 1890s, to the eve of the First World War. Cox believed the crisis for the Nonconformists was between 1906 and 1914.⁴⁶ Even here there was a more complex narrative. At the point when decline began Williams noted a mounting respect for

⁴¹ Williams, *Religious Belief and Popular Culture*, p. 12.

⁴² The only examples of where church was vital were the rites of passage from baptism, marriage and burial to the still significant churching after the birth, all of which usually required a public sacred space.

⁴³ David Martin, *A General Theory of Secularization* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), p. 83.

⁴⁴ Jeremy Morris, *Religion and Urban Change, Croydon 1840-1914* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1992), M. A. Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society: Oldham and Saddleworth, 1740-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), S. J. D. Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline: Organisation and experience in industrial Yorkshire, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁴⁵ Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 140.

⁴⁶ Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society*, p. 201.

Christian ministers in Southwark in the 1880s.⁴⁷ Up to 1914 demand for baptism in Bermondsey seemed to be on the rise.⁴⁸ Various explanations of subsequent decline, including the supposed collapse of interest by the middle class in urban mission from the outbreak of hostilities in 1914 were all offered as possible triggers for decay and thus the point of irreversible secularization. Simon Green and Sarah Williams thus place it further into the twentieth-century by suggesting the 1930s, yet Rex Walford's research into the growth of North London would again indicate the need for a more complex reassessment of this time frame.

Callum Brown and the death of Christian Britain

Evidence was emerging of a wider participation in organized religion amongst the working-classes in the nineteenth and early twentieth-century. Coupled with a more inclusive understanding of religion, this meant a significant reappraisal of the impact and influence of secularization was needed. It was with the publication of Callum Brown's highly original and provocative work, *The Death of Christian Britain* (2001), that a final *terminus ad quem* seemed to have been arrived at. This placed the real point of decline in the decades after 1950.⁴⁹ This failure was obscured by an initial optimism. Anglicans felt that the years directly after the Second World War were ones of renewal and growth. Senior figures such as John Wand, the Bishop of London, felt that the Church's energies to support the war effort were not in vain and it was hoped that the Church of England could survive in the post-war age.⁵⁰ Walter Matthews, a scholarly cleric who became Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, recalled the sense that revival was at hand immediately after the war.⁵¹ This explains the popularity of such movements as the Billy Graham missions that captured the nation's imagination in the late 1940s and early 1950s.⁵²

⁴⁷ Williams, *Religious Belief and Popular Culture*, p. 161.

⁴⁸ Williams, *Religious Belief and Popular Culture*, p. 87.

⁴⁹ Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 30.

⁵⁰ J. W. C. Wand, *The Church Today* (London: Pelican, 1960), p. 19.

⁵¹ W. R. Matthews, *Memories and Meanings* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, 1969), p. 293.

⁵² Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity 1920-1990* (London: Collins Fount Paperbacks, 1987), p. 454.

However, this optimism was to be short-lived. By the 1960s the Church of England felt that it was failing to connect with people, especially amongst the young. These attitudes were to indicate changing assumptions about religion. By the 1960s there seemed to emerge clear proof that there was significant and widespread decline in all aspects of the Church's life. Trevor Beeson, commenting on the numerical health of the Church in 1973, noted that attendance, and rites of passage were now in decline and church buildings under-used or abandoned.⁵³ Further research indicated that so discernible was this that the Free Churches became almost extinct in areas where they were once leaders. Methodism declined by forty-four percent in Manchester from 1964 to 1984.⁵⁴

Given this overwhelming evidence it was hard to reject Brown's thesis that this was the point at which the churches were in permanent decline. Most critically, Brown employed a much more sophisticated measure of religiosity than simple church attendances or participation in religious rites and ceremonies. His thesis in *The Death of Christian Britain* asserts that as a response to the Enlightenment the Evangelical movement produced an individualistic concept of salvation. Piety was centred on family and home and the custodians of such piety were the women folk of Britain.⁵⁵ Brown's contention is that Christianity became a feminized discourse. This raised the status of women in contrast to male brutality. This meant that much Victorian religion was dependant on female participation. This construct survived up to the 1950s but rapidly declined as a result of the change in role of women from the 1960s onwards.⁵⁶ Something new was taking place in British culture after the 1960s beyond simply a decline in church attendance.⁵⁷ He argued that there was a panoply of language and beliefs that surrounded men and women in the world of the nineteenth century that were rooted in a particular Christian discourse. These protocols gave supposed meaning and identity to the nation even if many felt no need to participate directly in organized religion. Britain was a Christian country because it claimed a Christian heritage and that was sufficient.⁵⁸ With

⁵³ Trevor Beeson, *The Church of England in Crisis* (London: Davis-Poynter Press, 1973), p. 41.

⁵⁴ Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, p. 603.

⁵⁵ Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 63.

⁵⁶ Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 78ff.

⁵⁷ Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 7.

⁵⁸ Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 142.

the advent of a more permissive age, epitomised by the supposed freedom of the Swinging Sixties, that old order was to collapse for ever. Past moral certainties that ranged from the keeping of the Sabbath to capital punishment and the abolition of prescriptive laws affecting women and homosexuals meant that Britain was no longer able to claim a traditional Christian identity.⁵⁹

Brown's argument suggested no substantial decline in attendance figures until the 1960s.⁶⁰ It also explained why in the 1960s mainstream denominations seemed to experience crisis so rapidly when these foundations crumbled. As persuasive as this theory was, there were some points of contention. Jeremy Morris felt Brown underplayed the changing nature of religion in the nineteenth century.⁶¹ The question remained why a system of beliefs that had underpinned British identity for more than a century could so rapidly collapse.⁶² It begged the question, whose norms and values were actually enshrined in these protocols and how deeply they were embedded in the culture? The process of abandonment may have had more to do with a growing democratization of opinion that enabled other voices to be heard and added to the debate over normative behaviour and national identity. Nigel Yates goes further in *Love Now, Pay Later?* (2010), and makes the point that many of the revolutionary movements of the 1960s owe their origins to foundations laid in the 1950s.⁶³ It could also be argued that the Church was not a passive recipient to this change. Indeed, in the case of the Church of England there was ample evidence that it participated in this revolution, at times supported it and, at the very least, was able to still shape something of the debate thanks to its privileged position. Michael Ramsey's attitude to key legislation at the heart of Brown's theory indicated a prelate who was content to move with the times over particular issues such as

⁵⁹ Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 12.

⁶⁰ Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 9.

⁶¹ Jeremy Morris, 'The Strange Death of Christian Britain: Another Look at the Secularization Debate' in *The Historical Journal*. 46.4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 963-976, p. 970.

⁶² Morris, 'The Strange Death of Christian Britain', p. 975.

⁶³ Nigel Yates, *Love Now, Pay Later? Sex and Religion in the fifties and sixties* (London: SPCK, 2010), p. 151.

divorce and capital punishment and supported issues such as the decriminalization of homosexuality.⁶⁴

The response by the Church

A significant secondary narrative to this debate was the not unbiased response the Church had made to the secularization theory. From the evidence stretching beyond the 1851 census there had been a long tradition of concentrating on the failures rather than recognizing the achievements of the Church. Often it had, as Jeremy Morris points out, readily accepted the notion of decline as a constant feature of Christian mission to the West over the last dozen or so decades.⁶⁵ Commentators as diverse as Trevor Beeson and Edward Norman had been content to accept the prevailing dogma that Christianity and the Church of England in particular had achieved little.⁶⁶ Indeed, how could it not have a sense of failure given the enormity of the task it set itself?⁶⁷ Even that milestone the 1851 religious census has now faced some revisionist analysis. The reality of the 1851 religious census was somewhat more complex than contemporary commentators suggested. K. D. M. Snell and Paul S. Ell's in *Rival Jerusalems: The Geography of Victorian Religion* (2000), suggests, that far from a blanket decline in church attendance, much less religious piety, the census indicated a more complex patchwork of results. In the case of the Church of England '...the Anglican Church emerges in a more favourable and responsive light than some portrayals of lethargy have allowed.'⁶⁸

Yet the Victorians' attitude of failure reflected the anxiety the Church had over an age of change and created a hermeneutic that encapsulated a failure by the Church to respond to

⁶⁴ Owen, *Michael Ramsey: A Life* (London: SCM 1998), pp. 145-165. An excellent example of this unofficial influence was found in the Crossman Diaries for October 1967. Richard Crossman was able unofficially to sound out the Archbishop of Canterbury on reform of the House of Lords. *The Crossman Diaries: Selections from the Diaries of a Cabinet Minister 1964-1970 Richard Crossman*, ed. By Anthony Howard (London: Mandarin, 1991), p. 386.

⁶⁵ Jeremy Morris, 'Secularization and Religious Experience: Arguments in the History of Modern British religion' in *The Historical Journal*, 55, 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 195-219, p.206.

⁶⁶ Edward Norman, *Secularization: Sacred Values in a Godless World* (London: Continuum, 2002), p. 166f.

⁶⁷ Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society*, p. 182.

⁶⁸ K. D. M. Snell and Paul S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems: The Geography of Victorian Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 399.

the needs of the nation. It was this prevailing attitude that had been supported by Wickham's critical assessment of Anglican mission in the nineteenth century and it was one that deserved continued re-evaluation. This position assumed a growing threat that, through the moral laxity of institutional religion, the soul of the nation was placed in jeopardy. Related to this was a dismissive attitude by the Church itself to any contribution it had made to national life. This over-critical stance was exemplified by authors such as Beeson. In his book *The Bishops* (2002), he was scathing in his criticism of their performance. His assessment was that bishops were now seen as relics of the past whose opinion could be ignored. Focused on managing numerical decline, their influence on society was no longer of any significance. Beeson argued that even in the nineteenth century bishops were responsible for the failure of the Church to speak out against injustice in a growing industrial society and hence widen the gulf between the poor and the Church of England.⁶⁹ That such an author in the opening decade of the new millennium could offer such an assessment might indicate that the Church had been often its own worst critic, in the light of contradictory evidence. From the publication and impact of *Faith in the City* to James Jones, the Bishop of Liverpool's, chairmanship of the Hillsborough committee there was an indication of a, perhaps at times unexpected, respect for the Church of England's contribution to national life.

Further revision and a broader understanding of religion

The reality had been a much more multi-faceted picture of religion in late twentieth-century Britain. In Brown's more recent work, *Religion and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain* (2006), he adapts his earlier thesis and recognizes that, even now, religious experiences were too complex to offer one set of explanations for. Historians such as Adrian Hastings suggested religion took on a greater dimension in world politics from the 1970s. The prominence of Islam in the East, to the contribution Roman Catholicism made to the democracy movement in Poland and East Germany and the Orthodox Church in

⁶⁹ Trevor Beeson, *The Bishops* (London, SCM Press, 2002), p. 1 and p. 4.

Russia were indicative of religion's political dimension. Even Anglicanism played a part in the opposition to and overthrow of the apartheid system in South Africa.⁷⁰

Sociologists of religion, such as Grace Davie, noted that in the late twentieth-century working-class communities had a sense of believing without belonging.⁷¹ She had been commissioned by Robert Runcie, as part of the research for *Faith in the City* to examine religious identity in the city. Through oral testimonies and wider research the inner-city of the 1980s was found to be neither godless nor irreligious. It was tolerant of religion yet failed to want to connect with its institutions.⁷² There was a survival of a residue of faith in the divine in a world that had long since abandoned any popular commitment to organized religion. Thus a more plausible analysis was Morris' suggestion that the picture of secularization was not wrong, but incomplete.⁷³

The 2001 census seemed to offer clear proof of a residual faith when it was revealed that more than seventy percent of the population claimed to have a faith in God when only between a fifth and a tenth of that population actually participated in mainstream religion. In fact, as had been already noted, religious beliefs that strayed from the orthodox had been evident in the British character for quite some time. The Anglican report, *The Army and Religion* (1920), indicated spirituality akin to Christianity but based on what could be described as fatalism that would call upon some unknown deity for support and protection at times of crisis.⁷⁴ Geoffrey Gorer, drawing on the unique research undertaken after the Second World War, revealed a similar growing need for religious language and ritual to negotiate the uncertainty of conflict and offer meaning in what appeared to be an unpredictable and amoral world.⁷⁵ Conflict seemed in equal measure to attract and repel people's belief in religion. The oft-quoted experiences of Vera Brittain

⁷⁰ Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, p. 655.

⁷¹ Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 94.

⁷² Geoffrey Ahern and Grace Davie, *Inner City God* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1987), p. 41.

⁷³ Morris, 'The Strange Death of Christian Britain', p. 975.

⁷⁴ E. S. Talbot, (Chair) *The Army and Religion: An inquiry and its bearing upon the religious life of the nation*, (New York: Association Press, 1920 reprinted by Kessinger Publishing's rare reprints, 2007), p. 166.

⁷⁵ Geoffrey Gorer, *Exploring English Character* (London: The Cresset Press, 1955), p. 265.

led to the loss of her faith due to multiple bereavements.⁷⁶ Conversely, no less a figure than Siegfried Sassoon had a complex religious identity, but the horrors of the war led to deep spiritual reflection and was ultimately no apparent bar to his conversion to Roman Catholicism.⁷⁷

Religious belief in the late twentieth-century failed to collapse in the way that some social historians anticipated it would. Death might be too final a word at this stage and displacement might be more descriptive.⁷⁸ In fact, given the host of quasi-religious tools available, people seemed to be less rational or at the very least as superstitious as they have been in past decades. The continued popularity of horoscopes is clearly evident in the most widely read newspapers, their back pages advertise a wealth of occult practices from palmistry to tarot and even television channels record supposed ghostly haunting and broadcast phone-in Spiritualism. This added to the difficulty in interpreting the term secularization itself. Callum Brown and Michael Snape have described it as ‘promiscuous’ in nature.⁷⁹ The apparent confusion around this seemingly simple question was indicated by the terminology used in describing it. It had been variously expressed as irreligion, de-Christianization, secularism, and even agnosticism and atheism.⁸⁰ Each term offers subtle difference in meaning and yet at times they had been applied interchangeably.

Callum Brown examined how even the term ‘secularization’ had changed meaning from an exclusively Christian perspective over the last century.⁸¹ Inevitably, the early research into religious identity seemed to be focused almost exclusively on a Eurocentric, Christian, paradigm.⁸² In reality, for many, religion was only defined in the narrowest of

⁷⁶ Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth: An Autobiographical Study of the Years 1900-1925* (London: Virago, 1983), p. 450.

⁷⁷ Max Egremont, *Siegfried Sassoon: A Biography* (London: Picador, 2006), p. 486.

⁷⁸ Morris, ‘The Strange Death of Christian Britain’, p. 976.

⁷⁹ Callum G. Brown and Michael Snape, Ed. *Secularisation in the Christian World* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p.1.

⁸⁰ Robin Gill, *The Myth of the Empty Church* (London: SPCK, 1993), p. 8.

⁸¹ Callum G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Harlow, Pearson and Longman, 2006), p. 3.

⁸² Martin, *A General Theory of Secularization*, p. 14.

ways, habitual attendance on Sunday at a recognizable denominational church.⁸³ Yet the actuality was that many felt organized religion need not be troubled when it came to private matters of the soul.⁸⁴ What had become clear was that most forms of this type of denominational religion were marginal to many working people's lives and only employed when necessity appears to dictate, often in at times of transition or crisis like birth, marriage, disease and death. Most significantly, for Brown, women, the core component of practising Christianity, drifted from the churches.⁸⁵ People's spiritual dimension had become a component of life not, to use a phrase of Brown's, a marbling throughout it.⁸⁶ Whatever the causes of secularization, its results were the recognition that the culture of Church was no longer framing people's lives. The developments in Newham this thesis will look at were, in part an attempt to re-site God back into the public realm.

Religion itself was being redefined throughout this process. For Morris a broader understanding of religion and its influence on society meant its contribution could be recognized and valued.⁸⁷ Ironically, the secularization debate was to contribute to a more holistic understanding of what religion was perceived to be. The multi-dimensional nature to religion as a phenomenon had long been recognized by sociologists. It was the growing encounter with other faiths that was to lead to a broadening comprehensive definition of religion that validated some aspects of diffuse working-class piety. Ninian Smart in his study of world religions sought to list these dimensions to encompass all religions.⁸⁸ Stark and Glock offered five dimensions to American religious expression, encompassing belief, practice, experience, doctrinal knowledge, and consequences, the

⁸³ Wickham, *Church and People*, p. 173.

⁸⁴ Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society*, p. 94. One could argue that the churches did not keep pace with other institutions that became more professional as the nineteenth century progressed. Medical expertise existed in the home for most because of poverty, as the local doctor became more affordable home remedies as the only outlet for aid decline. People saw the benefits of skilled physicians in a way that they did not value the skills of a trained priest.

⁸⁵ Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 10.

⁸⁶ Brown, *Religion and Society*, p. 52.

⁸⁷ Morris, 'The Strange Death of Christian Britain', p. 971.

⁸⁸ Ninian Smart, *The Religious Experience of Mankind* (Glasgow: Collins Fount paperbacks, 1983), pp. 15-25.

praxis religion engenders.⁸⁹ Callum Brown, in his thesis on religion in Glasgow, outlined four aspects of religion's social significance. These include belief, which may be significant but difficult to investigate, submission to religious imperatives that control social and economic behaviour, religious organizations and finally religious influence in nonreligious institutions.⁹⁰ This was to effectively reject the narrow confines earlier commentators wished to place on the debate and increasingly challenge assumptions about secularization. These final social dimensions to religion were of particular relevance to the ministry of Anglicans in Newham from the 1970s onwards.

Religion in Newham

If a broader understanding of religion is accepted, and one that encompasses non-Christian faiths, secularization might even have been reversed in some areas of the nation in the twentieth-century. When commentators turned their attention to the inner-cities of Britain there was now a further dimension contributing to the complex narrative of religion. The influx of sizeable numbers of settlers, at first from the Commonwealth and later from wider parts of Asia and Africa offered a additional layer for study. These new communities imported their own religious culture and ones that had either retained a significant commitment to organized religion through attendance at places of worship, or expressed a coherent faith amongst their extended network of family within the home. New places of worship for faiths such as Sikhism, Hinduism and Islam contributed to the cityscape and fresh expressions of Christianity such as Pentecostalism, a minor denomination in the Britain of the 1930s now began to dominate Christian identity in the inner-city.⁹¹ However, even here detractors assumed that these new denominations threatened mainstream Christianity and that the older traditions could not compete with these new churches. The reality was that these denominations were also to be strengthened by new-comers, and Greg Smith, working in Newham in the 1970s and 1980s, posited that, far from Newham being the place of irreligion, as it appeared to be in

⁸⁹ Rodney Stark and Charles Y. Glock, *Patterns of Religious Commitment*, 1 (California: University of California Press, 1968), p. 15f.

⁹⁰ Callum G. Brown, 'Religion and the development of urban society: Glasgow 1780-1914' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Glasgow, 1981), p. 7.

⁹¹ Yates, *Love Now, Pay Later?*, p.17.

the post-war era, religion had been reinvigorated. He suggested that twenty-five percent of Newham residents had some direct contact with a place of worship, far higher than the national average.⁹² This new reality for urban faith lends weight to the more contemporary analysis of secularization centred on the end to the 'Christendom' model of European religion. The power of Christianity to dictate identity and wield power may have come to an end but its place had been to some extent taken over by other expressions of faith rather than the secular void once prophesied by social historians under the influence of Marx and Weber. Moreover, Christianity in Newham was able to flourish thanks to the impact these other faiths had on secular institutions and indeed still wields significant influence in their recognition by secular bodies such as Newham Council.

Much of the research that sought to reposition the narrative of secularization had concentrated on the pre-war church. This, as has been noted, was a fruitful and fascinating era, but what of the decades after the Second World War, particularly those so closely associated with Brown's assumed demise of faith in Britain? This thesis seeks to extend the research beyond the decades after the war and ask how the Church of England fared in the decades that would be presupposed to be its most demanding, the 1970s, 80s and 90s. Taking as its research base the London Borough of Newham it will seek to examine how the Church of England negotiated the challenges presented by a part of East London that faced rapid and all consuming change through commenting particularly on the adaption of church buildings to community use. Significantly, this location had not been researched in any detail in the field of secularization. The area itself would have been in the past a site that typified working-class life and culture, and thus one could assume, represent that godless world so feared by the Victorians.⁹³ Certainly, by the 1930s, Missioners like Kennedy Cox felt it was almost impossible to discuss religion with the young who came under his influence in West Ham.⁹⁴ Yet what emerged was a

⁹² Greg Smith, *Newham: Directory of Religious Groups 1994-95* (London: Aston Community-Involvement Unit, 1994), p. 11.

⁹³ Even in 1902 Mudie-Smith stated that West Ham had one of the worst church attendance rates in London, lower than Holborn or Bermondsey and East Ham worse than Lambeth, Hackney, or Woolwich. *The Religious Life of London*, ed. Mudie-Smith, p. 339.

⁹⁴ Reginald Kennedy Cox, *An Autobiography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1931), p. 104f.

story of a church that was able to recreate itself, quite literally through rebuilding, and emerge as a faith group that was confident, lively and respected by those it came in contact with. A key area of the Church's life will be examined, its pastoral response to its neighbours. This was often understood to be second only to its worship life in shaping its identity for many Anglicans.⁹⁵ Often overlooked as an indicator of health it could be presumed that if the Church of England was vulnerable to collapse it would be these ancillary functions that would be most at risk. Moreover, it is when looking at its most visible asset, its buildings that a gauge of its decline in East London would be most indicative.

The place of buildings in the debate

The presence of a Christian community was perhaps most visibly indicated by its buildings. Iconic symbols of faith, churches have been a part of Britain's cultural heritage for over a thousand years. From the genealogy of a district in its graveyard to the heroism and sacrifice of its war memorials they contained a community's social history more than pub or factory.⁹⁶ Their missionary importance had been often forgotten as they became symbols not of growth but decline in inner-city areas that seemed to no longer want them.⁹⁷ Yet the adaption and re-creation of these buildings was evidence of a strategy precisely aimed at combating decline. Investing in them was still thought to be worthwhile well into the twentieth-century. Historians have, in the past, focused on the liturgical function of these edifices. The irony was that much important secondary work was carried out in its church buildings.⁹⁸ The Victorian Church had taken great pains over the minutiae of church design. The modern era wanted the Church to be less obsessed with its own agenda, exemplified by a worker at the Mayflower Centre entitling his book *People Matter More Than Things* (1965).⁹⁹ One explanation for this attitude was a wish to distance Christianity from a past that seemed more concerned about structures than people. Controversies that dominated the life of the Church of England over ritual

⁹⁵ Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society*, p. 269.

⁹⁶ Richard Giles, *Re-pitching the Tent: The Definitive Guide to Reordering your Church* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2004), p. 64.

⁹⁷ Giles, *Re-pitching the Tent*, p. 59.

⁹⁸ Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society*, p. 23.

⁹⁹ George Burton, *People Matter More Than Things* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965).

and ornament were now felt to be irrelevant in its future mission to win back the soul of the country. Despite the fact that many Victorians saw beauty and ornament as missionary tools there was a reaction amongst inner-city clergy to this approach. Activist clergy like Nicolas Stacey, working in south London in the 1960s, complained about '...the blanket of deadening conservatism and obscurantism which hangs over the Church like a cloud.'¹⁰⁰

Interest in church buildings in Britain was felt to be an aspect of this obscurantism and this intellectual gap meant church design suffered. Two early commentators, G. W. O. Addleshaw and Frederick Etchells, felt that post-war Church of England design was conservative and formulaic.¹⁰¹ Writers from the Continent such as Rudolf Schwarz were critical of a slavish adoption of past architectural styles that offered nothing to contemporary needs.¹⁰² Reacting to this conservative approach, Kathleen Bliss in *The Future of Religion* (1969), was sceptical of a shrine model of church that smacked too much of individualism rather than corporate identity.¹⁰³ Its rejection would liberate denominations like the Anglicans who could truly serve the needs of a wider community.¹⁰⁴ Brian Frost offered an alternative reading of church that rejected past models as redundant and suggested that simple buildings that could be adapted as tastes and needs altered should become more common.¹⁰⁵ Large preaching houses that accommodated growing congregations were no longer realistic. A repeated theme amongst Newham clergy in the closing decades of the twentieth-century was the contrast between vast churches and small congregations, crumbling edifices and lack of resources.

One of the most significant gaps in writing was a lack of any clear theology underpinning design. Peter Hammond, who wrote two influential works on post-war church architecture *Liturgy and Architecture* (1960), and *Towards a Church Architecture* (1962),

¹⁰⁰ Nicolas Stacey, *Who Cares* (London: Anthony Blond, 1971), p. 62.

¹⁰¹ G. W. O. Addleshaw and Frederick Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948), p. 224f.

¹⁰² Rudolf Schwarz, *The Church Incarnate: The Sacred Function of Christian Architecture*, trans. by Cynthia Harris (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1958), p. 9.

¹⁰³ Kathleen Bliss, *The Future of Religion* (London: Watts and Co Ltd, 1969), p. 19.

¹⁰⁴ Bliss, *The Future of Religion*, p. 30.

¹⁰⁵ Brian Frost, *The Secular in the Sacred* (Norfolk: Galliard, 1972), p. 8.

did not feel the need to express any theological basis for his ideas. One reason for this might simply have been the assumption that a theological narrative was so well rehearsed that its repetition would be unnecessary. There was also the possibility that suggesting a theological approach would inevitably encourage the polemic of partisan attitudes still evident in the Church of England. Its result meant that there was no way of challenging the function and design of these influential works for a developing post modern context. In contrast, others commentators like Martin Purdy, who was to play such a leading role in Newham churches, felt that theology was fundamental to any new building. Purdy, in fact, owned that Peter Hammond was an early influence on him.¹⁰⁶ For him theology was the key to church design.¹⁰⁷ Church buildings in his opinion needed to understand its function primarily as a theological statement and this would inform all other ancillary work.¹⁰⁸

A theology of service

How then did the church building reflect this changing theological and social context and attempt to maintain a connection with wider British society? One area which was developed was the increasing use by the local community of church buildings for wider activities. J. G. Davies felt that it was immoral that in an age of scarce resources the Church should not share its gifts with others.¹⁰⁹ The Church was felt by its leadership to be losing contact with ordinary people. Michael Ramsey spoke to the World Council of Churches and called for the Church to move from its own agenda to an agenda that would capture the imagination of the world.¹¹⁰ The 1960s, the point of crisis for Callum Brown, saw a growing concern for the Church to be involved in issues that mattered to ordinary people. There was a developing interest in the Church's work in community.¹¹¹ Service gave the Church a role in a society even if this was a sacrificial one in the face of

¹⁰⁶ Interview, Purdy, 6 April 2010. Canon Peter Hammond, 1921-1999. He was a polymath with interests as wide-ranging as art, the Orthodox Church and architecture and worship. He was a founder member of the 'New Churches Research Group'.

¹⁰⁷ Martin Purdy, 'The Urban Experience. A Study of Church Building within the Industrial Metropolis' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Birmingham, 1984), p. 419.

¹⁰⁸ Purdy, 'The Urban Experience', p. 416.

¹⁰⁹ J. G. Davies, *The Secular use of Church Buildings* (New York: Seabury Press, 1968), p. 206.

¹¹⁰ Beeson, *Britain Today and Tomorrow* (Glasgow: Collins, 1978), p. 11.

¹¹¹ Trevor *Britain Today and Tomorrow*, p. Beeson, 139.

indifference. God's Kingdom was found not in full pews but a generous ministry. Pastoral outreach became at once a tool to absorb and counteract the secularization process.

Yet the influence of secularization was evident within some aspects of ecclesiastical thought. Authors such as Hammond wrote about why churches should be designed in a particular way and why community rooms should be attached, but this was often from a pragmatic point of view. A more theologically literate response came from Peter Smith in his *Third Millennium Churches* (1972). He argued that modern church building had to have a pastoral role in the wider community. Smith spoke of the 'Diakonic Post-Script' which stressed the servant model of the Church.¹¹² This was a theme that was taken up by Beeson in the 1970s.¹¹³ Later authors such as Richard Giles felt a sense that the Church should be recklessly generous with its space and open its buildings up to the wider community.¹¹⁴ Yet again there was little clear theological exploration of why church buildings should include more imaginative pastoral activity. Much of the argument for such an attitude was rarely presented. If there was a theology it was often assumed that the reader would intuitively be aware of the arguments and accepted them unchallenged. This inability to articulate a theology hinted at an ambivalence towards expressing a theology.

In contrast, one highly influential, for Newham, and articulate theology of place came from the Edward Cadbury Professor of Theology at Birmingham, J. G. Davies. He and his followers were to offer a cogent and substantial exploration of what churches were for in the modern world and thus how they should be shaped for use. Davies founded the *Institute for Study of Worship and Religious Architecture* at the University of Birmingham in 1962.¹¹⁵ For him the starting point was the person and work of Jesus as a model of primary importance in understanding the role of the Church.¹¹⁶ This drew on

¹¹² Peter F. Smith, *Third Millennium Churches* (London: Galliard Ltd, 1972), p. 97.

¹¹³ Beeson, *The Church of England in Crisis*, p. 51f.

¹¹⁴ Giles, *Re-pitching the Tent*, p. 129.

¹¹⁵ B. S., Benedikz and D., W Hardy, *John Gordon Davies (1919-1990) an appreciation and a bibliography of his published works* (Birmingham: The Hoyloft Press, 2003), p. 6.

¹¹⁶ Davies, *The Secular use of Church Buildings*, p. 208.

the influence of writers such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Harvey Cox and related their thought to church buildings. Works such as *The Secular Use of Church Buildings* (1968), and *Every Day God: Encountering the Holy in World and Worship* (1973), but also the literary output of the Institute's *Birmingham Bulletin* offered a forum to discuss the theory and practices of this approach to church architecture. This theological attitude was to offer a counter narrative of decline that rejected religion's continued marginalization. It offered once again a justification for religion, and particularly an incarnational Christian faith that embraced activities such as leisure, recreation, and community work through its public buildings. The concept of a sacred realm extended beyond the walls of the church on a Sunday and religion was marbled once again into the life of a community.

Newham was fertile ground for such thought. There had been much social engagement offered by the Church in East and West Ham before the war. A theology of service had its first expression in the settlements and missions that were to become a significant feature of Newham life. It was these Christian community projects that were to engage with local people at a pastoral level. It was their engagement and their influence on local Anglican churches that encouraged a reinvention of Anglican parish life in Newham from the mid-1970s at the point of supposed steepest decline. Theology was to be at the heart of this movement, not simple expediency.

The present

Much of the work examining and testing the effects of secularization have been traced up to the Second World War. McLeod's early work ends with the Victorian period, Morris with the First World War, Cox and Williams in the 1930s, even Walford takes his narrative only up to the eve of the Second World War. How had secularization touched the post-war church? It could be assumed that the last decades of the century would be even harder for old denominations like the Church of England in Newham. Morale would decline along with adherents, churches would close, there would be reduced clergy numbers and the Church would become nothing more than a footnote in Newham's history.

The reality was more surprising. At just the point in the 1970s, according to Brown's theory, secularization should now have begun to bite, in fact the Church of England in Newham began to reinvent itself. In recent decades, the Church of England had undergone a substantial renewal of its life, and this was expressed most visibly through its church buildings. Rather than admit defeat in the face of secularization, the Established Church sought once again to discover a meaning and purpose to its life and witness and it did this through the most traditional of mission tools, its building. The significance of this redevelopment of church buildings had often been overlooked. It has been seen as simply part of a wider practical process, modernising old plant. What makes Newham's developments different was the survival in archives and oral history of a theological narrative that buttressed developments which resisted the compulsion to limit the sphere of religion to a set of rituals on a Sunday morning. There had been a subtle shift in attitude towards these supplementary activities. In the past they were mission tools that it was hoped would encourage people to join the Church, now they were ends in themselves as Christians developed an inclusive understanding of the Kingdom of God.

Over a twenty year period almost every Anglican Church in the borough was either substantially reordered or more significantly, rebuilt. The result was a denomination that felt revitalised, fitted for future mission in the borough and more attractive to adherents than their previous incarnations. It, in many cases, prefigured the recommendations of reports such as *Faith in the City* and, as will become evident, was to be based not on simple expediency or desperation, but on a unique expression of theology drawn principally from the influence of J. G. Davies and through three of his followers.

Three key figures who worked closely with Davies were to be drawn to Newham. Peter Bridges, who was a Fellow of the Institute and an architect himself, was appointed Archdeacon of Southend in 1972. His remit was particularly to meet the challenge of redundant and decaying church buildings within the diocese. He established a Research and Development Unit specifically to look at the issue of ageing and problematic church

buildings. Martin Purdy was yet another student of Davies and an architect who founded the firm of Architects, Planners, and Ecclesiastical Consultants (APEC), and came to Newham to discuss the redevelopment of St Bartholomew's Church, East Ham, the first and most influential of all the developments. His firm was to oversee all four of the schemes in this study. The third person was the Revd Stephen Lowe, who had built two churches under the Institute's guidance in Birmingham, and was appointed as Rector of East Ham in 1975. Through their influence a process of renewal was initiated, beginning with St Bartholomew's, East Ham, St Mark's, Forest Gate, St Michael's, Manor Park and St Mark's, Beckton. They in turn inspired neighbouring churches in the borough and beyond to re-examine their church buildings in the light of changing need and opportunity. However, it was the theology that lay behind these projects that lifted these developments from the commonplace rebuild to something of significance.

Davies and his followers wished to reject the increasing pressure to marginalise Christianity to a single dimension of life. There was a belief that all aspects of service were a manifestation of God's Kingdom and the religious realm had to be expanded into ordinary human life. The early developments, like St Bartholomew's and St Mark's, Forest Gate, were to be produced after a lengthy and detailed process of negotiation and education with their congregations. These theories were not simply imposed on people, nor were they accepted uncritically by their congregations. A fresh understanding of the use of church buildings was offered to the wider church that transformed them once again into mission tools, one part of an armoury that enabled the Church of England to maintain a sense of purpose and place within Newham life and this work will seek to tell this story.

In Chapter One the place of Newham (an under researched area) within post-war British society will be explored. Newham's recent history reflects many of the key themes that characterise the post modern nation Britain became; the end of old industries, economic and political realignment a post-imperial culture, reconstruction and multi-culturalism. This work explores the impact of secularization well into the twentieth century and beyond in a given area. This will offer a detailed and nuanced approach to the study,

offering clear empirical evidence rather than the broad brush approach that sometimes characterises the historiography of this subject.

A local study can reveal a snapshot of British life in a far more detailed way. It captures a brief, but significant period in time for both the nation and Church. The rise of Thatcherism and the Anglican Church's response to the perceived crisis of the inner-city can be examined in a particular area of Britain that most felt the impact of political and economic change. Newham is a unique space within modern society. It is genuinely multi-cultural with a wide range of faiths and cultures living within its boundaries. This study argues that the Anglican Church has been energised by these challenges and not defeated by them. Clear evidence of growth and renewal can be found in Christian communities at a time when popular perceptions would assume decline and death. Its very uniqueness offer significant insights into the health of some Christian communities and demonstrate the complex nature of secularization.

In researching this thesis, the author has been given access to a wide range of materials from individual churches. Impressively, a great deal of material, minutes, information sheets, memos and correspondence survives in many local and diocesan archives. There is a wealth of published material that sprang from Newham authors' experience that touches on these developments. Alternative voices, particularly the surprising interest local newspapers take in the activities of these churches, offer different narratives.

These developments came at a time of transition for the press.¹¹⁷ The local newspaper for Newham, the *Newham Record*, was of particular significance in this research as its editor for much of this period was Tom Duncan. He was a practicing Anglican, a lay reader in London Diocese. This meant that articles regarding church matters regularly appeared in the papers' pages that were sympathetic and informed. However, this did not mean that the paper was neutral. There were a plethora of competing voices that shaped what was deemed newsworthy, from the proprietor, the editor and even the advertisers. Newspapers

¹¹⁷ Roy Hattersley, *Fifty Years on : A Prejudiced History of Britain Since the War* (London: Abacus, 1997), p. 335.

shape as much as reflect public opinion and this was particularly true of the *Recorder*.¹¹⁸ The *Recorder* felt it had a mandate to speak for the local people. At one stage it claimed it was the alternative voice of opposition to the Labour controlled Council. The paper reflected an anachronistic bias to the establishment as it favoured the Church of England. Of all religious subjects the Anglican Church seemed to create the most newsworthy items and until very recently other faith communities rarely warranted a mention. Ephemeral by their very nature papers bring colour to some stories that minutes and memos do not. If the articles were simply filler, this was highly advantageous to the local churches as the *Recorder* expended much time on them. They offer one of the only local and contemporary alternative voices that regularly commented on the Church. Significantly, its letters page produced little evidence of concern for religious matters, the only exception being the contentious issue of religion in schools. However, this was perhaps less to do with faith and more to do with national identity as debates in the 1980s raged around the teaching of comparative religion. The Church was one of the few community organizations still flourishing in the borough where a story could be told.

These newspapers all have agendas and biases. What they do offer in some cases is an almost daily record of how and why these community developments progressed. They explore the challenges faced by such initiatives, their cost in time, money and energy that reflect the not inconsiderable strength and resources of local Christians. They also offer some insight into the thought process of those who were witness to such projects. In addition to this work an oral history project was initiated that led to the interviewing of key personnel involved at the time of the developments and in the present.

Inevitably, when engaged with an oral history project looking at events over a thirty year time period, memory is a key factor. The physical ability to remember key events and people is one hurdle to pass, another the inevitable softening or adapting of memory over that time period. As has been pointed out by Thompson in *The Voice of the Past* (2000)

¹¹⁸ John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, methods and new directions in the study of modern history* (Harlow: Longman, 2010), p. 97.

people's values and norms can change significantly in that time.¹¹⁹ Conversely, humans have the need and capacity to create 'mythic moments', events that at the time may have only passing significance but have grown to become the selectively remembered symbols of the process under gone.¹²⁰ On a national level this can be the 'Bull Dog Spirit' of the Blitz; for the subjects in this research it could be a damaged roof, or public meeting. These distortions need to be handled with care, but like all myths they relate some truth to the events discussed.¹²¹ Thus what follows is no more than the recollections of those involved in these events, shaped and filtered by subsequent events.¹²² This is not to downplay their significance.

The author was personally known to many of those interviewed. This offers a unique insight into the world they inhabit and affords potentially greater trust from interviewees when asking questions.¹²³ At the same time it was important to be mindful that the author's assumptions should not colour their narrative.

Telling a story, particularly a story related to extraordinary events that ordinary people took part in, is a powerful means of recording local history. The very nature of the event makes it worth recording but for many people their story can be rarely preserved.¹²⁴ One of the significant contributions that this work offers is the conservation of these people's stories about Newham and the Anglican Church in the latter part of the twentieth century.¹²⁵ Some of those interviewed have been able, through books and reports, to set their thoughts down for posterity, but many of the laity and clergy have never been asked

¹¹⁹ Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 3rd Edition, 2000), p. 129.

¹²⁰ Stephen Parker explores the significance of the myth within people's assimilation of their experience of war time Birmingham in *Faith on the Home Front: Aspects of Church Life and Popular Religion in Birmingham 1939-1945* (Peter Lang, 2005), p. 29.

¹²¹ Alessandro Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different?' in Robert Perk & Alistair Thompson, *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 63-74, p. 63. Portelli notes the contentious nature of oral history.

¹²² Oral history is not the pinnacle of historical research but a significant addition to it even with all the problems of editing and selection that human memories can be prone to. Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different?', p. 68-9.

¹²³ David H. Mould, 'Interviewing', in Donna, De Blasio et al. *Catching Stories: A Practical Guide to oral History*. (Athens USA: Swallow Press, 2009), pp. 82-103, p. 83.

¹²⁴ Thompson. *The Voice of the Past*, 2000, p. 3.

¹²⁵ David H. Mould draws attention to the need that people have to tell their story in his article: 'Interviewing', p. 86.

to talk about their experiences nor reflect on them and this could be rightly termed 'salvage folklore'.¹²⁶ What emerges is a narrative that reflects the concerns and energies of a group of Christian in Newham at a time of significant social changes.

The authors' power in selecting and recording some voices and not others will always hint at bias because, in the limited scope of any work, editing is essential. The range of people interviewed included past and present clergy and laity involved in these developments. In a potentially clerical dominated area the voice of lay people could have been over looked. In interviewing the local community about their experiences were perceived to be of significance, worth noting and that history, their history, mattered.¹²⁷ Class can play a significant role even today in what can and cannot get recorded within society.¹²⁸ In experiencing an institution like the Church that has been controlled by the upper and middle classes there will be an inevitable blurring of class boundaries. Clergy will be assumed to be middle class, even if their origins were drawn from less privileged and affluent backgrounds. Alternatively, many norms and values that might be held to be exclusively middle class will be embraced by working class culture as well. If we are not living in a classless society, many distinctions and boundaries have become fluid particularly in the melting pot of Newham. It is hoped that the authentic voice of Newham people, albeit a small band of such people, can be heard in these pages. In their selectivity an often-unheard voice is recorded and their experiences validated.¹²⁹

Gender will also play an important role in seeking a balanced presentation of ideas. Women and men recalls things differently, use different language codes and can find significance in different events and contexts.¹³⁰ Of those interviewed seven were women and ten men a little under thirty percent of the total being female. Although this figure cannot claim to be equal it reflects the limitations of women's roles in these projects in those early days. Indeed, given the exclusive male clerical profession of the 1970s and

¹²⁶ Howard L. Sacks, 'Why do Oral History?' in Donna, De Blasio et al. *Catching Stories: A Practical Guide to oral History* (Athens USA: Swallow Press, 2009), pp. 1-19, p. 10.

¹²⁷ Thompson. *The Voice of the Past*, 2000, p.12.

¹²⁸ Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different?', p. 72.

¹²⁹ Mould, 'Interviewing', p. 84.

¹³⁰ Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, 2000, p.179.

1980s it is hardly surprising that male voices in this period predominate. Joan Sangster notes how often religious discrimination can be forgotten as too painful or humiliating to recall.¹³¹ By their very nature the women interviewed were still very positive about their attitude towards the Church despite evidences of discrimination. Ironically, for an institution that had struggled with equal gender roles, many of the women interviewed saw the church both as an oppressive institution but also as a place where new roles and new skills could be discovered that empowered them in their wider lives. The process of developing these church and community centres was, for some, key to that liberation.

The work is almost exclusively concerned with the Church of England in Newham; this was because it was so substantial a story that to attempt to tell a wider story would lose the strength of a detailed approach. It seeks to examine that experience of Church in the, as yet, under researched period of the late twentieth century, a period when there should be clear evidence of secularization occurring. The study examines a group of churches redesigned and built under the influence of a small band of followers of J. G. Davies and the architectural firm of APEC that carried out the most significant redevelopments in the borough of Newham.

This study will seek to test the theories of secularization and, particularly, examine the context of a discrete area of East London, the London Borough of Newham. This was an area bounded by three rivers, the Lea to the west and the Roding to the east, the Thames to the south and an area of common land known as Wanstead Flats to the north. The study will examine the development of new church buildings in the borough from 1970 to 2010. It will examine the life of the local church at a deanery level, which is effectively coterminous with the borough's boundaries, in particular looking at the development of four churches. The study will examine the causes of their redevelopment, the theological *raison d'être* for such developments, in the light of perceived decline, what was achieved and a measure of how successful they were. These will include: St Bartholomew's, East Ham, in the centre of the borough, a church founded in the Liberal, Catholic tradition of

¹³¹ Joan Sangster, 'Telling our Stories: Feminist debates and the use of oral history', in Robert Perk & Alistair Thompson, *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 87-100, p. 90.

the Church of England; St Mark's, Forest Gate, a church firmly in the Evangelical tradition set to the north; St Michael's, Little Ilford, also known as the Froud Centre, based in the east and again in the Liberal, Catholic tradition, but in partnership with a local charity, Aston Mansfield. Finally, there is St Mark's, Beckton. This is an Evangelical church, but also an ecumenical partnership with the local Methodist, the United Reformed and Roman Catholic Churches and is in the south of the borough in an estate created near to the site of the old Beckton Gas Works. Newham's history was intertwined with many of the significant events faced by the nation in the post-war period. The Diocese of Chelmsford was a key agent in supporting these projects and although other denominations have undertaken similar schemes, it is the theological outlook of people like Martin Purdy and Stephen Lowe that suggest a more substantial philosophy underpinning these developments.

The assumption, if the theory of secularization is to be accepted, is that, by the twenty-first century, churches in an urban, post industrial, working-class district should show evidence of substantial decay. This would both support the theory of secularization and give justification for social commentators and historians to ignore or downplay the work of the Church in British society. One would assume that the Church and most particularly the Church of England would show signs of retreat and marginalization. The supposition would be that there was little or no church growth and new churches would be unlikely to succeed in such unpromising territory. In fact, this study shows the reverse is true.

In undertaking this research a significant archive of material had been uncovered regarding these buildings. It gives a unique insight into the minds of those involved in the project. Almost complete collections of correspondence, reports, minutes of meetings and the ephemera associated with fundraising, education, informing and celebrating these structures have survived alongside the recording of oral histories of some of the leading players in Newham then and now. This is to some extent a pivotal point in archival research given that within a few years much material would have been stored on electronic databases that are proving to be quite ephemeral. A story of how one denomination responded afresh to the challenges of inner-city ministry is preserved and a

heroic struggle remembered in the faces of rapid social change. Chapter One offers a historical survey of the London borough of Newham. It presents East London as a significant arena to discuss issues around secularization and the life of the Church of England. Through the diaspora of residents of this densely populated industrial area of Britain a new post-war era attitude to the city and religion spread throughout the nation. Newham had experienced many of the key elements of Britain's post-war story from recovery after the devastation of war, the decline in traditional industries, the rise in immigration and the deprivation and renewal that characterised late twentieth-century inner-city.

Chapter Two traces the growing concern the Church had for social welfare amongst the urban poor. It charts the growth and survival of the settlements and missions in the era of the welfare state, and how they developed an embryonic theological and pastoral response to the industrial working-class.

Chapter Three examines the first significant development of a church in the post-war era in Newham, the re-creation of St Bartholomew's church, East Ham. The chapter will seek to explore what prompted such a development, how it was achieved, what theology was behind such an understanding and who were the key protagonists.

There follows, in Chapter Four, a case study of three other churches that developed their sites in the light of the St Bartholomew's project to examine how the initial theories were tested and developed. In particular, it will investigate how differing church traditions sought to make sense of their role in a shifting urban context.

Chapter Five offers an evaluation of the present state of these community churches and their life and contribution to the local area as well as an examination of their ability to survive in the face of supposed growing secularization. The final section is a Conclusion and evaluation of the evidence presented and suggestions for further avenues of research in East London.

Chapter One:

From County Borough to Urban Priority Area: Newham 1945-2010

Introduction

London's East End has two distinct areas. The first is widely seen as East London proper. This is the East End of Whitechapel, Bethnal Green Stepney and Bow. This was the preserve of the Cockney, of gangsters like the Krays, poverty, overcrowding and crime, streets where the perpetrator of the Ratcliff Highway murders and Jack the Ripper stalked. This is an East End that is repellent and fascinating, glamorous and depraved. It is a social construct often created by outsiders and is the East End that had drawn artists, historians, social commentators and tourists to examine its highways and back alleys.¹

There is another East End, twin of the first, joined along its border by the silver slither of the river Lea. This is the East End of Stratford, Custom House, Canning Town, West and East Ham, of Forest Gate, Manor Park and Beckton. This East End, known for more than a century as London over the border, is the less well known sibling to the west. Because for much of that time, this was officially in the supposed leafy county of Essex, it has not always drawn the attention of authors. Yet it faced war devastation as significant as any other part of Britain. It was home to the busiest port in England with a vast industrial complex on the doorstep of the metropolis. It had a substantial population on the eve of the Second World War, and its subsequent diaspora fed much of the post-war new towns of Essex extending the influence and experience of East London beyond its boundaries. It is one of the most culturally diverse parts of London, much more so than Stepney or Hackney. It was and is one of the poorest boroughs in London. It has faced regeneration that, by 2013, still is not complete with the docklands developments, the Olympics and their legacy. This overlooked area of Newham has drawn no significant studies of its religious life and yet it would be assumed that the fate of a significant Anglican urban community could be mapped within its boundaries over the last fifty years. Here would

¹ Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (New England: Princeton University, 2004), p. 10.

be a place where the challenges of the twentieth-century would test the Church of England and decline would be clearly discernable. This chapter will look at Newham's story and explain why it is such fertile ground in offering a counter narrative to church decline.

Winning the peace

The dilemma Britain faced in the after-glow of victory in 1945 was reconstruction. It was inner-city areas like East and West Ham that faced this colossal task. By the end of the war 14,000 houses, about twenty-six percent of the housing stock of the borough had been destroyed (Fig 1.1).²



Figure 1.1 Dorniers over West Ham, c. 1940. With the permission of the Imperial War Museum.

East Ham had the task of repairing 27,000 homes.³ Yet destruction was also an opportunity. Devastation gave the council an unprecedented chance to reshape the

² London, Stratford Local Studies Archive, Thomas Eugene North, *The County Borough of West Ham* (1947), p. 2.

³ Anon, *East Ham Official Guide 1960* (London: Pyramid Press Ltd, 1960), p. 39.

borough and right the perceived wrongs of the past.⁴ Before the war there was little overall planning strategy and this led to heavy industry and residential areas living cheek by jowl in West Ham. Like many other inner-city areas it had more than its fair share of slum dwellings.

Alongside housing, community buildings like churches were also badly affected by bombing. The Diocese of Chelmsford faced the daunting task of repairing over seventy churches damaged in the East London area (Fig 1.2).



Figure 1.2 Interior of St Bartholomew's Church, East Ham, shortly after being hit in air raid, 1940. With the permission of the Rector and PCC of the East Ham Team Ministry.

⁴ Marc Brodie, 'From the slums to the suburbs: Labour Party policy, the LCC and the Woodberry Down Estate, Stoke Newington, 1934-61' in *The London Journal*, Vol. 24, 1999, pp.51-69. There is an important article about pre-war Labour housing policy that felt forced to favour quantity over quality, making social housing expensive., p. 51.

It also had to rebuild ten which were totally destroyed, most of which were in West and East Ham.⁵ Bombed churches seemed to have taken on a unique significance during conflict as symbols of the philistinism of the Nazis and icons of endurance and hope.⁶ Yet even here there were fresh opportunities for renewal. As part of the nation's architectural heritage, the Blitz had created new vistas for them to be viewed.⁷ Patrick Abercrombie, in *The County of London Plan* (1943), wanted to create space around churches so that they might be displayed.⁸ This had artistic merit but created a sense these buildings were isolated from the communities they claimed to serve. West Ham Council vainly hoped that different denominations would be able to amalgamate church sites in the council's new 'Neighbourhood' vision. This was an ambitious hope and the burgeoning ecumenical movement was at too early a stage to achieve such a goal. The Anglicans could reduce their stock of churches by not rebuilding some; the rest had little choice but to settle on their own pre-war land.⁹

The war began to change attitudes to the working class. The London Blitz also created something of a myth around the Cockney. Gareth Stedman-Jones notes the East End working class became a potent tool in the propaganda war. They were shaped into the very spirit of London and its rugged and enduring spirit.¹⁰ Entertainers, originally from Music Hall, such as Stanley Holloway, born in Manor Park in 1890, and a chorister at All Saints Forest Gate, represented the common man in films such as *Salute John Citizen* (1942), *This Happy Breed* (1944), and *The Way Ahead* (1944). It was this honest, chirpy, and stoic East Ender who would endure all that the Nazis could throw at these islands (Fig 1.3).

⁵ Gordon Hewitt, *A History of the Diocese of Chelmsford* (Leicester: Minerva Press, 1984), p. 127.

⁶ Mark Polad, 'The Appreciation of Ruins in Blitz Era London', *The London Journal*, Vol. 30:2 (2005), p. 7.

⁷ Polad, 'The Appreciation of Ruins in Blitz Era London', pp. 1-24, p. 14.

⁸ J. H. Forshaw and P. Abercrombie, *The County of London Plan: Prepared for the LCC* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1943), p. 17.

⁹ London, Stratford Local Studies Archive, G. E. Smith, and Thomas E North, *The County Borough of West Ham Development Plan* (West Ham, 1952), p. 33.

¹⁰ Gareth Stedman-Jones, 'The "Cockney" and the Nation 1780-1988', in *Metropolis London: Histories and representations since 1800*, ed. by David Feldman and Gareth Stedman-Jones (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 272-324, p. 313.



Figure 1.3 Symbols of defiance in the face of hostilities a couple marry in the bombed out ruins of St Bartholomew's Church, East Ham, 1940. With the permission of the Rector and PCC of the East Ham Team Ministry.

This was a rather romantic ideal of the East Londoner. When Winston Churchill visited Green Street, East Ham, after the first air raids he was faced with heckles by the local womenfolk who were not at all stoical about what they endured.¹¹ The shambolic nature of local government also tarnished this image of the bull dog spirit. E. D. Idle produced a report on community adjustment for the Fabian Society and was critical of the lack of preparedness West Ham Council displayed at the beginning of the war.¹² However, this myth of the indomitable Cockney has shaped white East End identity ever since. It

¹¹ Oral testimony recorded on *The World at War*, dir. by Jeremy Isaacs (Thames Television Production, 1973-74), Episode 4 'Alone' (May 1940-May 1941) interviews with the residents of the borough.

¹² E. D. Idle, *War Over West Ham: A Study of Community Adjustment. A Report for the Fabian Society and Ethical Union* (London: Faber and Faber, 1943), p. 32.

contributed to the emergence of the age of the common man in post-war Britain which challenged the churches view of the working classes.

Post-war reconstruction

The euphoria of a victory in war and politics produced other benefits for East London. The landslide election of the Labour Government meant the Labour-controlled borough was able to profit from a synchronized approach at local and national levels to the challenges ahead. Labour had successfully played its part in winning the peoples' war it was now attempting the difficult manoeuvre of winning the peoples' peace.¹³ West Ham Council responded to the challenge with enthusiasm. Between 13 June 1944 and the 6 of April 1945, 30,387 houses had been repaired.¹⁴ There were ambitious plans to create sixteen 'Neighbourhoods' throughout the borough of approximately ten thousand people each.¹⁵ Transport, the zoning of industry and the expansion of primary and secondary schools were all proposed, in line with Sir Patrick Abercrombie's own vision for a new London in *The Greater London Plan* (1945).¹⁶ By 1955 2,700 homes had been built; no mean feat when labour and materials were continually in short supply.¹⁷ West Ham was so proud of its achievements that it was able to boast in the *West Ham Official Guide* (1958/9), 'West Ham gave the lead to the rest of the country in the redevelopments...'¹⁸

There were casualties as the emergent welfare state left relations between statutory and voluntary social provision in an ambivalent position. One of the most important voluntary groups was the Church. What was its role to be in this new socialist future? During the war Archbishop Temple had been one of the prophets of the welfare state with books

¹³ Roy Hattersley, *Fifty Years On: A Prejudiced History of Britain Since the War* (London: Abacus, 1997), p. 5.

¹⁴ London, Stratford Local Studies Archive, Minutes of West Ham County Borough Reports of Committees to be Submitted to the Council, (1944), p. 349.

¹⁵ London, SLSA, Thomas Eugene North, *The County Borough of West Ham* (1947), p. 4.

¹⁶ Patrick Abercrombie, *The Greater London Plan: A Report prepared on behalf of the Standing conference on London Regional Planning by Professor Abercrombie at the request of the minister of Town and Country planning* (London: H.M. Stationers, 1945), p. 56.

¹⁷ Anon, *West Ham Official Guide, 1955-6* (Suburban and Provincial Association, 1955), p. 26.

¹⁸ Anon, *West Ham Official Guide 1958/9* (Suburban and Provincial Association, 1958), p. 22.

such as *Christianity and the Social Order* (1942).¹⁹ Temple's untimely death meant the Church of England was prevented from giving a significant lead in accommodating *The Beveridge Report* (1942).²⁰ With Fisher as his replacement the relationship was far less certain. Churches were to feel marginalised by the new state provision of welfare and a vital contact with ordinary, un-churched people apparently curtailed.

Despite 'austerity Britain' there was an air of optimism that was expressed in national events such as the Festival of Britain (1951), and spectacles like the coronation (1953), an event both nationalistic and religious. The churches shared this ebullient mood as they felt they were moving into an age of revival that placed the pessimism of the interwar years behind them.²¹ This religious revival that swept across Europe, America and Australia seemed the high water mark of Christian vitality.²² West Ham, initiated its own mission to win back the lapsed and welcomed Billy Graham to the borough. The Bishop of Barking, Hugh Gough, even faced criticism for being too supportive of Graham's missions.²³ As the 1950s drifted into the early 60s British society seemed to be heading towards an optimistic future.

Society was restructuring itself and a symbol of this was when East and West Ham were amalgamated under the London Government Act 1963 much to West Ham's displeasure. In its *Observations* (1962), the council said it would 'deplore and oppose the suggestion that West Ham should lose its independence.'²⁴ West Ham would have to share its dwindling resources with East Ham and, ironically, just at the point when the borough

¹⁹ Callum G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Harlow, Pearson and Longman, 2006), p. 166.

²⁰ William Temple, *Christianity and the Social Order* (London: Penguin, 1942).

²¹ The Bishop of London, J. W. C. Wand writing in the early 1960s saw the power and influence of the Church all around him. Wand, *The Church Today*, p. 131.

²² Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding secularisation 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 5f.

²³ London, Lambeth Palace Library, John Smallwood, Some Biographical Information about the Bishops of Chelmsford from the foundation of the Diocese in 1914 to the present day, including the Suffragan Bishops of Colchester, Barking and Bradwell, draft (2007), p. 77.

²⁴ London, SLISA, G. E. Smith, County Borough of West Ham Reorganization of London Government: Observations of the Council of the County Borough of West Ham Upon the Proposal of HM Government (1962), p. 3.

had reach its population target of under 165,000.²⁵ With the merger of the two boroughs came the union of the deaneries of East and West Ham, and churches that had little contact with one another now were expected to collaborate for the first time.

Industry

One of the most significant aspects of Newham future life was its industrial base. The relationship between Church and industry has not always been appreciated. Yet it was local industry that was providing part of the stipend for the Vicar of St Luke's, Canning Town, Tate and Lyle gave generously for the building of St John's, North Woolwich, and much of the outreach of missions and churches were geared towards alleviating poverty amongst the resident workforce and providing healthy recreational outlets. To appreciate the fate of religion in the borough its economic base needed to be assessed.

Employment was a key issue for the new Labour Government.²⁶ Peter Willmott, in his pioneering research in the late 1950s noted the new affluence of many East End families.²⁷ It was to some extent a golden age where unskilled jobs were plentiful. Growing economic independence and the birth of a mass consumer culture heightened the sense of alienation from traditional Christian values. National unemployment was at an all time low at 264,000 in 1955.²⁸ Yet many jobs were still physically demanding but intellectually unchallenging. The real problem Willmott saw was the lack of opportunity for young men to find a job that was worthwhile.²⁹ The gender breakdown of the

²⁵ London, SLISA, G. E. Smith, County Borough of West Ham Reorganization of London Government: Observations of the Council of the County Borough of West Ham Upon the Proposal of HM Government (1962), p. 3.

²⁶ In the era before the welfare state work was a fundamental part of working class identity. The middle classes could fall back on family background and educational attainment for their identity; all that the working class had was their labour. Much of the time of a working class man was dictated by work. Employment defined the health and nature of his family, their neighbourhood and how they spent their leisure. It was a means of gaining respect and status in the community as well as inculcating particular social and political norms and values John Benson, *The Working Class in Britain 1850-1939* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), p. 9.

²⁷ Peter Willmott, *Adolescent Boys of East London* (London: Pelican, 1969), p. 19.

²⁸ C. M. Law, 'Employment and Industrial Structure', in *Understanding Post-war British Society* ed. by James Obelkevich, (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 85-98, p. 87.

²⁹ Willmott, *Adolescent Boys of East London*, p. 122.

workforce was changing although still two thirds male.³⁰ In 1950 up to eight million women were now employed; by 1990 this had risen to eleven million.³¹ Authors such as Callum Brown saw significant implications for piety due to this shift. He felt that women who had played a crucial role in church life had less free time to spend on church and were now economically liberated to choose alternative recreational activities.³²

In the past industry in the borough had mixed blessings. Dwellings had been crammed next to its manufacturing centres with all the accompanying squalor. The problem that West Ham faced shortly after the war was inappropriate distribution of industry. Much of this was spread out in an 'L' shape along the rivers Lea and Thames.³³ West Ham was seen as predominantly industrial whereas East Ham was a dormitory town.³⁴ The type of industry West Ham had attracted was becoming anachronistic. John Marriott indicated this caused a crisis for industry in pre-war West Ham. Land was scarce and industry found it difficult to up-grade facilities in a competitive market and new types of industry were unable to move into the borough.³⁵ *The Greater London Plan* (1945) aimed to restrict further industry and regroup it into discrete zones, even moving some out to Barking and West Thurrock.³⁶

Much of the industry based in West and East Ham had been of national significance, the area was extraordinarily productive with 706 industrial sites in West Ham alone.³⁷ These included Tate and Lyle sugar refining, Venesta Plywood, ICI, and Lever Brothers as some of the highest employers.³⁸ In East Ham the gas works at Beckton was the largest in Europe.³⁹ The nation was moving to new types of industry such as banking, vehicle

³⁰ Law, 'Employment and Industrial Structure', p. 86.

³¹ Law, 'Employment and Industrial Structure', p. 86.

³² Brown, *Religion and Society in Twentieth-century Britain*, p. 205.

³³ London, SLISA, Thomas Eugene North, *The County Borough of West Ham* (1947), p. 2.

³⁴ Abercrombie, *The Greater London Plan*, p. 22.

³⁵ John Marriott, 'West Ham: London's Industrial Centre and Gateway to the World, Stabilization and Decline 1910-1939' in *The London Journal* Vol. 14 1989, pp. 43-58, p. 43.

³⁶ Abercrombie, *The Greater London Plan*, p. 131.

³⁷ London, SLISA, G. E. Smith, and Thomas E North, *The County Borough of West Ham Development Plan*, West Ham (1952), p. 14.

³⁸ London, SLISA, Thomas Eugene North, *The County Borough of West Ham* (1947), p. 1ff.

³⁹ Anon, *East Ham Official Guide 1960*, p. 14.

manufacturing, and insurance.⁴⁰ Land was not available for these and West Ham was to stagnate in the interwar years.⁴¹

One of the great examples of this change in industry were the docks. Before the war the Royal Docks were one of the most significant employers.⁴² Larger than their eastern neighbours they could accommodate ships of 30,000 tonnes.⁴³ Even before conflict the docks were a declining source of employment. 34,000 dockers were employed in 1937 in comparison with 52,000 dockers employed in 1920.⁴⁴ They were dogged with industrial unrest and unreliable employment patterns.⁴⁵ Colin Davis compared the distinctive nature of dockers between 1945 and 1955. Their difficult and dangerous work often made them feel isolated and independent and created a unique sense of identity.⁴⁶ In post-war London the dockers were the epitome of the independent Cockney character.⁴⁷ Of all trades in the borough the docker became mythic as they symbolised at times working class brutality and yet also featured in Christian discourses of conversion as in the case of an ex-docker who was regular member of St Mary's, Little Ilford.⁴⁸

The London Borough of West Ham *Official Guide* (1967) had been justly proud of these docks.⁴⁹ Yet within five years of its publication they were to close. R. B. Oram had worked in the docks most of his life and was staggered to see one skilled forklift driver at Tilbury move 100 tonnes of cargoes in a few minutes.⁵⁰ Containerization needed deeper

⁴⁰ Marriott, 'West Ham: London's Industrial Centre and Gateway to the World', p. 52.

⁴¹ Marriott, 'West Ham: London's Industrial Centre and Gateway to the World', p. 51.

⁴² London, SLISA, Thomas Eugene North, *The County Borough of West Ham* (1947), p. 1.

⁴³ Anon, *East Ham Official Guide 1960*, p. 25.

⁴⁴ R. B. Oram, *The Dockers' Tragedy* (London: Hutchinson, 1970), p. 146.

⁴⁵ Oram, *The Dockers' Tragedy*, p. x.

⁴⁶ Colin Davis, 'Working with the hook: A Comparative Study of London and New York Dockworkers, 1945-1955' in *The London Journal*, Vol. 25:2 (2000), pp. 79-95, p. 79.

⁴⁷ Stedman-Jones, 'The "Cockney" and the Nation 1780-1988', p. 276.

⁴⁸ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

⁴⁹ The Royal's were the largest enclosed docks in the world in 1967. There were eleven miles of quays, which could accommodate fifty ocean-going vessels at one time. Forty shipping companies worked in the docks with connections all over the globe. There were 140 miles of standard gage railway track to ferry goods from docks to marshalling yards. Anon, *London Borough of West Ham: The Official Guide and Directory 1967* (The Suburban and Provincial Association, 1967), p. 25.

⁵⁰ Oram, *The Dockers' Tragedy*, p. 170.

ports for the larger vessels, and a smaller labour force. It was estimated that by the 1970s ninety percent of the original workforce were obsolete.⁵¹

Other industries were also on the wane. The Beckton Gas Works was to close when natural gas was successfully tapped, creating yet more unemployment.⁵² The Thames itself, the reason West Ham grew in the nineteenth century, was no longer seen by industry as a vital transport artery. River and rail were giving way to air and roads as the principal means of distribution. By 1975 only a third of industries based along the Thames believed the river was vital for their work and many were moving out of the area.⁵³ Manufacturing was free to re-site itself not just in other parts of the country but other parts of the world. The 1960s were to be a challenging time for East and West Ham as poverty bred crime. Casualties of this industrial collapse were places of worship and the local newspaper, the *Newham Recorder*, was to regularly feature instances of vandalized churches as disaffected youth vented their anger at a vulnerable symbol of authority and power. Accompanying this were nightmarish visions of rioting at church run youth clubs in the heart of the Docklands area.⁵⁴

The 1970s were to be a period of increasing unrest and division in society. Newham faced even more economic change that it could do little to combat. The 1970s oil crisis and the downturn in world markets placed even more strain on East London's economy, still attempting to recover from the collapse of its industries. The Heath administration found it difficult to manage the ensuing industrial unrest.⁵⁵ Wildcat strikes became a common occurrence and caused further economic malaise.⁵⁶ The late 1970s were to see continuing decline in national manufacturing output by fifteen percent as Britain shifted from manufacturing to a service industry.⁵⁷ East London was not able to keep pace with changing employment patterns. In a report on *Work and Industry* (1975), it had a disproportionate number of jobs in manufacturing rather than the growing service

⁵¹ Oram, *The Dockers' Tragedy*, p. 171.

⁵² Jerry White, *London in the Twentieth-century: A City and Its People* (London: Penguin 2002), p. 75.

⁵³ London, SLISA, E. P. Bell, *Work and Industry in East London* (Docklands Joint Committee, 1975), p. 4.

⁵⁴ P. Wilson, *Gutter Feelings: Christian youth work in the inner-city* (London: Marshalls, 1985), p. 36.

⁵⁵ Arthur Marwick, *British Society Since 1945* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. xiii.

⁵⁶ *Stratford Express*, 2 June 1972, p. 40.

⁵⁷ Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*, p. 229.

sector.⁵⁸ The labour force of the docks had declined from 29,250 in 1960 to just 2,315 in 1981.⁵⁹ In 1975 unemployment figures were higher in East London than they were in other parts of the capital.⁶⁰ The United Kingdom, alongside much of the developed world, had entered into the post-industrial age and found it hard to compete with newly emerging economies that were able to provide more competitive rates.⁶¹ Poverty was to be just as significant an issue for inner-city churches as they struggled to maintain failing buildings with congregations on low incomes.

By the early 1980s much of the old industrial base of East London was derelict with little insight or energy to prevent further decline.⁶² In the 1980s unemployment topped three million nationally, thirteen and a half percent of the total workforce.⁶³ The principal form of employment was a female dominated service industry as part time employment rose to twenty-five percent of the total workforce. Eighty percent of part time, low paid workers were women.⁶⁴ This was a period of major recession with a growth in unemployment and crime figures steadily rising.⁶⁵ The early 1980s saw sporadic rioting in urban areas around Britain including Newham.⁶⁶

The docks were now a symbol of that urban, industrial decay. There remained the question what to do with the vast tracts of waste land. The Docklands Joint Committee was formed by the GLC in 1974. Made up of five riverside boroughs it was tasked to oversee the redevelopment of the docks. The London Docklands Strategic Plan was published in 1976.⁶⁷ The International Monetary Crisis meant that there was little or no public money for major projects and schemes such as the Jubilee Line, a potentially vital

⁵⁸ London, SLSA, E. P. Bell, *Work and Industry in East London* (Docklands Joint Committee, 1975), p. 3.

⁵⁹ White, *London in the Twentieth-century*, p. 206.

⁶⁰ London, SLSA, *Work and Industry in East London* (Dockland Joint Committee, 1975), p. 9.

⁶¹ Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*, p. 240.

⁶² White, *London in the Twentieth-century*, p. 75.

⁶³ Law, 'Employment and Industrial Structure', p. 87.

⁶⁴ Law, 'Employment and Industrial Structure', p. 89.

⁶⁵ White, *London in the Twentieth-century*, p. 76.

⁶⁶ *Newham Recorder*, 23 April 1981, p. 1.

⁶⁷ White, *London in the Twentieth-century*, p. 77.

transport link, were put on hold.⁶⁸ Land that the Church owned became a valuable asset as private, public partnerships developed.

Even the boom years of the 1980s seemed to bypass Newham. By 1981 Newham had the fourth highest unemployment figure in London. Male unemployment stood at over eleven percent in 1981 and had risen to over nineteen percent by 1983.⁶⁹ The 1981 census showed that thirty-eight percent of Newham's workforce was unskilled. Development in Newham was delayed and this meant that there were few significant wage earners living in the borough.⁷⁰ By the 1990s areas of Newham such as Plashet and East Ham had one of the lowest incomes per household in London.⁷¹ Newham was lagging behind the rest of London with a disproportionate number of manual workers. There was a thirty-nine percent decrease in manufacturing in the borough and twenty-nine percent decline in transport and utilities.⁷² In 1986 less than a quarter of jobs in Newham were in manufacturing. The Council was now the largest employer.⁷³ *Newham Official Guide* (1986), was unable to gloss over the fact that the Royal Docks were now empty. However, it could report the Thames Barrier had been built as had the London City Airport and the Docklands Light Railway.⁷⁴

The election of a Conservative Government in 1979 was to profoundly affect Newham. This led to a renewed impetus to regenerate the Docklands and promote the voluntary sector as a means by which the state could in theory withdraw from social provision. With the politicization of the docks, both right and left saw it as a significant ideological battleground that had to be won. Its uncertain future enabled the Government to wrest control from the boroughs. To encourage private funding into public works a board, drawn from the business sector, was established as the London Docklands Development

⁶⁸ White, *London in the Twentieth-century*, p. 77.

⁶⁹ London, SLISA, Kenneth Lund, *Newham Digest of Census Statistics 1 Supplement: The Working Population* (London Borough of Newham, 1983), p. 3.

⁷⁰ London, SLISA, Kenneth Lund, *Newham Digest of Census Statistics 1 Supplement: The Working Population* (London Borough of Newham, 1983), p. 5.

⁷¹ White, *London in the Twentieth-century*, p. 229f.

⁷² London, SLISA, Kenneth Lund, *Newham Digest of Census Statistics 1 Supplement: The Working Population* (London Borough of Newham, 1983), p. 5.

⁷³ Anon. *Newham Official Guide 1986* (Burrow and Co Limited, Publicity House, 1986), p. 56.

⁷⁴ Anon. *Newham Official Guide 1986* (Burrow and Co Limited, Publicity House, 1986), p. 34.

Corporation (LDDC), in 1981.⁷⁵ However, in the first stage of the development the Royal Docks in Newham were excluded from the LDDC's initial plans.⁷⁶ This meant Newham was able to avoid some of the major mistakes the LDDC made in Tower Hamlets and the Isle of Dogs.

Some churches were critical of this lack of consultation. It led to the notorious funeral for the community that was publically staged by the Rector of the Isle of Dogs as a demonstration of local fears for the future.⁷⁷ If nothing else it was evidence of the left wing nature of some clergy in East London at the time and their willingness to align themselves with the local community. In reality the LDDC found they needed to work in collaboration with the local councils affected by the developments on both sides of the river. Once seen as a thriving community, N. Falk argued that the docks were no longer a homogenous community but in reality a dwindling population with no financial resources.⁷⁸

The new Conservative Government wanted to be seen to be active in dealing with the problem of inner-cities, especially in the light of mass rioting in the early 1980s. One response to decline was Council-backed regeneration projects for Docklands.⁷⁹ It was the gas works, not the docks that was to be one of the first sites earmarked for development in Newham. *The Beckton Plan* was published in 1980. Beckton was on the site of a vast redundant coal fired gas works. Initially regeneration had taken the form of housing developments. There had been some exploration of the potential of the site as early as 1969. By 1975 only 393 dwellings had been built and 253 dwellings came into council ownership.⁸⁰ The plan recognized the best way to improve the lives of residents was to provide adequate housing and increased employment opportunities.⁸¹ The borough as a

⁷⁵ White, *London in the Twentieth-century*, p. 77ff.

⁷⁶ White, *London in the Twentieth-century*, p. 84.

⁷⁷ The coffin labelled 'community' is on display in the Museum of London's Docklands campus.

⁷⁸ N. Falk, 'London's Docklands: A Tale of Two Cities' in *The London Journal*, Vol. 7 (1981), pp. 65-79, p.78.

⁷⁹ Anon, *The Beckton District Plan* (London Borough of Newham, 1980), p. 11.

⁸⁰ Anon, *The Beckton District Plan* (London Borough of Newham, 1980), p. 11.

⁸¹ Anon, *The Beckton District Plan* (London Borough of Newham, 1980), p. 13.

whole and the docklands in particular were seen as a dumping ground for the unwanted.⁸² In Beckton alone there were 2,300 unemployed in 1976 and the area had lost 24,000 jobs in the past ten years. It was one of the worst spots for male unemployment in London at nine and a half percent.⁸³ Significantly, the local churches were invited to make representation to those who were planning Beckton's future. The council were supportive of any joint developments and wanted to 'promote the maximum co-operation.'⁸⁴ This was to lead to the creation of St Mark's, Beckton, as an ecumenical church and community centre. There was a growing awareness that local churches were one of the few remaining institutions in the borough that played a role in social cohesion, albeit on a small scale. As will be explored in further detail in the next chapter, the rhetoric of a Conservative led state was now calling on voluntary organizations to plug the welfare gap and reduce the cost of social care. The realities of a genuine partnership between state and voluntary sector may never have been fully achieved but the Church was able to carve out a role in care in Newham that contradicted the notion of continuous decline.

Population

One of the less appreciated aspects of post-war East London that was to shape church life was its fluctuating population. Hugh McLeod makes the point that West Ham was one of the most significant parts of London in the nineteenth century precisely because of its numerical growth.⁸⁵ Yet East London's population was to shift dramatically in the post-war era. One result of this diaspora was to spread the influence and experience of East London beyond its bounds into the neighbouring counties and in particular the Diocese of Chelmsford in Essex. Newham also seemed to provide a substantial number of celebrities that contributed to popular culture in this period (Fig 1.4).

⁸² Anon, *The Beckton District Plan* (London Borough of Newham, 1980), p. 13.

⁸³ Anon, *The Beckton District Plan* (London Borough of Newham, 1980), p. 13.

⁸⁴ Anon, *The Beckton District Plan* (London Borough of Newham, 1980), p. 56.

⁸⁵ Hugh McLeod, *Piety and Poverty Working-Class Religion in Berlin, London and New York 1870-1914* (London: Holmes and Meire, 1996), p. 29.



Figure 1.4 Pupils from Plaistow Grammar School. The actor and musician Joe Brown is in the second row third from the left. **With the permission of Ms Susan Black.**

Appendix 1 is a list of East End actors who actually grew up in Newham who further extended its influence. In 1939 the population of West Ham stood at 350,000. This was unsustainable as it placed impossible strain on almost every social organization. In the light of the housing crisis of the late 1940s the council's solution to the problem of overcrowding was to encourage a drift out of West Ham to new towns developing in Essex and to limit the overall population to no more than 165,000.⁸⁶ The population was to steadily decline to the end of the century. Such a decline could only have an adverse affect on congregational numbers especially when factoring in high aspirational values that many churchgoers had prompting them to seek a perceived better life in the suburbs and new towns of Essex. The 1981 census indicated that the population of Newham now stood at 207,975. By 2001 it had grown for the first time since the war to 237,900 and it

⁸⁶ London, SLISA, Thomas Eugene North, *The County Borough of West Ham* (1947), p. 4.

was estimated that it would rise to 260,900 by 2016.⁸⁷ Despite this increase there was a steady stream of residents who chose to move out of the borough, about 9,300 between 1991 and 2001.⁸⁸ Oral testimonies from clergy in Newham invariably indicate the fluid nature of congregation. This combination of population decline and shifting patterns of residence were to change the nature of church attendance.

Immigration

If there was evidence that the white population were moving out there was also evidence that new ethnic minorities were moving into the borough. This was an act that could have been perceived as being threatening to the existing churches particularly with migrants from new faith communities settling in Newham. One could presume that the new faiths could further diminish the influence of the older Christian community and increase potential for conflict. The reality was somewhat surprising.

It was on the Essex coast, on the 22 June 1948, that the SS Windrush docked at Tilbury and opened a new chapter in twentieth-century British history. Nationally migration was slow at first with 1,000 arrivals by 1951, 2,000 in 1952 and 1953 and then jumping to 10,000 in 1954 and 27,500 in 1955.⁸⁹ By 1961 two thousand Barbadians had been employed by London Transport.⁹⁰ The impact that these first migrants had was to be of more significance than their numbers might suggest. These led to a flurry of books published on the perceived coloured problem including Learie Constantine's *Colour Bar* (1954), Michael Banton's *The Coloured Quarter* (1955), Sheila Patterson's *Dark Strangers* (1963), and R. B. Davison's *Black British Immigrants to England* (1966). Some of this early research was hardly unbiased. Michael Banton looked at West Indian and West African immigrants to Whitechapel in the 1950s. He assumed that much of

⁸⁷ London, SLSA, Focus on Newham Local People and Local Conditions (The London Borough of Newham, 2002), p. 9.

⁸⁸ London, SLSA, Focus on Newham Local People and Local Conditions (The London Borough of Newham, 2002), p. 15.

⁸⁹ White, *London in the Twentieth-century*, p. 133.

⁹⁰ Stephen Inwood, *A History of London* (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. 855.

their sense of discrimination was trivial and exaggerated.⁹¹ West Ham was little affected by the early waves of immigration and the SS Windrush did not even get a mention in the *Stratford Express* for 1948. The most significant ethnic minorities in West Ham up to the 1960s were the Irish and Jewish communities that had made a home in the borough since the early nineteenth century.⁹²

Yet, contemporary historians such as Panikos Panayi noted how quickly immigration transformed British society.⁹³ In 1951 only one in twenty Londoners had been born outside of the United Kingdom and many of these were white European refugees who had settled in London since the war. At one estimate perhaps no more than 4,000 of these settlers came from black or Asian communities. By 1991 the census figures indicated 1.35 million black and Asian people live in Greater London and accounted for one in five of the capital's population.⁹⁴

By the 1960s there was a growing black presence in West Ham. This was to transform the life of the borough and its churches. Relatively quickly writers recognized the significant position churches had in welcoming and integrating at least the Christian immigrants.⁹⁵ R. B. Davison suggested there were high levels of church attendance amongst Caribbean men and women.⁹⁶ The churches were concerned enough to commission the newly formed *London Institute of Race Relations* to look at the Church's response to minority groups. The result was Clifford S. Hill's *West Indian Migrants and the London Churches* (1963). Hill, who was to work in Newham in the early 1970s, found that many West Indians felt unwelcome in English churches and that many

⁹¹ Michael Banton, *The Coloured Quarter: Negro Immigration in an English City* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1955), p. 238.

⁹² Anon, *London Borough of West Ham The Official Guide and Directory 1969-70* (The Suburban and Provincial Association, 1969), p. 82ff.

⁹³ Panikos Panayi, 'Immigration, Multiculturalism and Racism', in *Twentieth-century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change*, ed. by Paul Johnson, Francesca Carnevali and Julie-Marie Strange 2 edn, (Harlow: Longman, 2007), pp. 247-262, p. 247.

⁹⁴ White, *London in the Twentieth-century*, p. 130.

⁹⁵ Sheila Patterson, *Dark Strangers: A Sociological Study of the Absorption of Recent West Indian Migrant Groups in Brixton, South London* (London: Tavistock Publication, 1963), p. 252.

⁹⁶ R. B. Davison, *Black British Immigrants to England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 128.

churches felt unprepared for these new members of their community.⁹⁷ English worship for newcomers felt cold and austere. Wilfred Wood and John Downing's *Vicious Circle* (1968), was a response to deteriorating relationships between black and white people in 1960s Britain. They felt that churches were amongst the few grassroots organizations that could reflect a sense of integration between black and white.⁹⁸ Claire Taylor in her research into Jamaican migration and Brixton suggests churches' responses were more complex and detailed than popular assumptions suggest.⁹⁹ Yet there was much anecdotal evidence of black Christians being discouraged from attending mainstream denominations. If the churches were to have any integrity they had to be welcoming and inclusive, as Wood and Downing said: 'The question for the churches today is not their survival but their soul.'¹⁰⁰

One incident that highlights the differing attitudes that immigration raised at a national, local and church level was the response to Enoch Powell.¹⁰¹ After his dismissal by Edward Heath from the shadow cabinet the dockers of East London took part in a demonstration of support for him stating 'Don't Knock Enoch'.¹⁰² This epitomised for some the image of the Cockney in the late twentieth-century as that of the racist bigot.¹⁰³ The *Stratford Express* for the 17 May 1968 reported that a local vicar the Revd Barry Arscott condemned the dockers' actions and their 'inane remarks' and the 'recent outbreaks of racial prejudice have not only been terrifying but nauseating.'¹⁰⁴ For some it radicalized a growing number of black and Asian youths who saw Powell as a wake up

⁹⁷ Clifford Hill, *West Indian Migrants and The London Churches* (London: The London Institute of Race Relations, 1963), p. 6.

⁹⁸ Wilfred Wood and John Downing, *Vicious Circle* (London: SPCK, 1968), p. 66.

⁹⁹ Claire Taylor, 'British Churches and Jamaican Migration – A Study of Religion and Identities, 1948-1965' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Anglia Polytechnic University, 2002), p. vii.

¹⁰⁰ Wood and Downing, *Vicious Circle*, p. 79.

¹⁰¹ There is a detailed discussion of Powell's motives in Peter Brook's article 'India, Post-Imperialism and the origins of Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' Speech', in *The History Journal*, Vol. 50 (September 2007), pp. 669-687, p. 669ff.

¹⁰² Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain 1964-1970* (London: Little and Brown, 2006), p. 644.

¹⁰³ Stedman-Jones, 'The "Cockney"', p. 317.

¹⁰⁴ *Stratford Express*, 17 May 1968, p. 4.

call not just for tolerance but equality.¹⁰⁵ It could be said that a similar response was now being made by the churches.

The issue of race was to be a dominating theme of the *Stratford Express* over the next decade. David Sheppard in *Built as a City* (1974) felt less threatened by black people finding support in their own ethnic group and recognized that it was a means by which they could gain power and speak for themselves, a farsighted observation for 1974.¹⁰⁶ When it was proposed Enoch Powell become chair of the local Conservative Party this led to a debate in the *Stratford Express* with a number of letters in support. These indicated a low point in race relations. ‘No one apart from a handful of do-gooders, wanted a multi-racial society in this country’ thundered one letter, another spoke of the ‘trickle [of immigrants] becoming a flood...’¹⁰⁷

Racism in Newham could manifest itself in violence as in the case of the murder of Akhtar Ali Baigh in 1980.¹⁰⁸ The trial of his murderer, Paul Mullery, had far right groups supporting the action of the seventeen year old.¹⁰⁹ In the midst of this tension the first significant legislation to combat racism came into force through a series of Race Relations Acts that now had powers to enforce penalties.¹¹⁰ Previous Acts in 1965 and 1968 touched on housing and employment but had little weight.¹¹¹ The Race Relations Act of 1976 created the Race Equality Council that had authority to monitor racism in housing and employment and strengthen existing powers.¹¹² Newham Council now felt the need to produce a series of reports that took seriously issues faced by a growing multi-cultural borough. An early report *Ethnic Groups in Newham* (1978), one of the first

¹⁰⁵ Mike and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain* (London: Harper Collins, 1998), p. 254.

¹⁰⁶ David Sheppard, *Built as a City: God and the Urban World Today* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1974), p. 196.

¹⁰⁷ *Stratford Express*, 12 May 1972, p. 34.

¹⁰⁸ White, *London in the Twentieth-century*, p. 152.

¹⁰⁹ *Newham Recorder*, 19 February 1981, p. 1.

¹¹⁰ Chadwick noted that the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, actually received death threats because of his support of the Race relations Bill. Owen Chadwick, *Michael Ramsey: A Life* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1990), p. 174.

¹¹¹ Panikos Panayi, *The Impact of Immigration: A Documentary History of the Effects and Experience of Immigration in Britain Since 1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 28.

¹¹² Panayi, ‘Immigration, Multiculturalism and Racism’, p. 252.

council documents to analyse the impact of immigration into the borough, was based on the 1971 census and the National Dwelling and Housing Survey for 1977. It stated that a quarter of the borough's population came from ethnic minorities, which made it the third highest in London.¹¹³ This included 14,120 West Indians, 18,420 Indians, 4,910 Pakistanis, and 3,300 Africans with a total of 39 different racial groups living in Newham.¹¹⁴

The majority of the urban poor were now from ethnic minority groups. Many of these new residents were living in substandard accommodation.¹¹⁵ Susan J. Smith argued that, although there were cultural and social reasons why ethnic groups settled together, there was strong evidence that this was also linked with inequalities in housing apportionment. The Caribbean and Asian communities were more likely to find themselves in the same districts, effectively segregated from their white neighbours'.¹¹⁶ This was further evidence that white communities moved out when other ethnic groups moved in. The nation was becoming a more polarised society. Panikos Panayi, quoting from a Commission for Racial Equality report, stated that ninety-four percent of white people had few or no friends who came from a different ethnic group to them.¹¹⁷ In one significant area this trend was challenged; the multi-racial nature of Newham congregations.

Newham's multi-cultural nature was growing and in the 1980s and 1990s accepted a disproportionate number of asylum seekers and other minority groups, compared to other London boroughs.¹¹⁸ In a council report, *Newham Ethnic Minorities* (1984), the 1981 census indicated that out of 207,975 inhabitants, the population from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan had risen from 27,000 in 1971 to 55,334. By 1993 forty-

¹¹³ London, SLSA, *Ethnic Groups in Newham Vol.II*. (London Borough of Newham, 1978), p. 1.

¹¹⁴ London, SLSA, *Ethnic Groups in Newham Vol.II*. (London Borough of Newham, 1978), p. 4.

¹¹⁵ Kenneth Lund, *Newham Ethnic Minorities*. Newham Digest of Census Statistics. 2 Supplement (London Borough of Newham, June 1984), p. 26.

¹¹⁶ Susan J. Smith, *The Politics of 'Race' and Residence: Citizenship, Segregation and White Supremacy in Britain* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), p. 36ff.

¹¹⁷ Panayi, 'Immigration, Multiculturalism and Racism', p. 252.

¹¹⁸ Katherine Mumford and Anne Power, *East End Family and Community in East London* (Bristol: Power Policy Press, 2003), p. 76.

two percent of Newham was made up of Afro-Caribbean and Asian peoples.¹¹⁹ There was every indication this cultural diversity would continue into the 21st Century.¹²⁰

Racism seemed to be almost endemic in Newham in the 1980s and Christopher Husbands has pointed out had been a feature there for over a century.¹²¹ In 1986 it was estimated that one in four black residents of Newham faced racial harassment in a twelve month period.¹²² The Council-backed Newham Monitoring Project recorded racial incidents in the borough and reported in its *Tenth Anniversary Report* (1990), that Newham had one of the worst reputations for racial violence in the country.¹²³ Yet, alongside intolerance, greater understanding had developed as well. Panayi Panikos argued that multiculturalism and racism developed in this country together.¹²⁴

The impact of the bombings of 11 September 2001 in America and 7 July 2005 in London raised the question of whether a multi-cultural and multi-racial society had succeeded. The work of four lone bombers seemed to place these assumptions in doubt. Works such as the *Parekh Report* (2000), had already queried the future of multiculturalism in Britain and Tariq Modood's *Multi-cultural Politics* (2005), explored the place of Muslims in Britain. How easy residents of Newham have found it to succeed in Britain is no less a complex question. Most of its inhabitants had come not from positions of power but from positions of political and economic weakness. Many faced racial abuse and high levels of poverty. Yet it was also a borough that prided itself on its diversity, schools that played a significant role in promoting community cohesion and a base for minorities to feel relatively safe and welcome. Its diversity could be seen to have

¹¹⁹ London, SLSA, Ram Aurora, Newham Borough Trends Pt. 1 Newham Overview 2 Ed, (The London Borough of Newham, 1993), p. 2.

¹²⁰ London, SLSA, Focus on Newham Local People and Local Conditions (The London Borough of Newham, 2002), p. 16.

¹²¹ Christopher Husbands, 'East London Racism 1900-1980: Geographical Continuity in Vigilantes and Extreme Right Wing Political Behaviour' in *The London Journal* Vol. 8 No. 1. (1982), pp. 3-26, p. 9. Although it first manifest itself as anti-Semitism by the 1950s organized hate campaigns were increasingly directed towards the black community.

¹²² Panayi, *The Impact of Immigration*, p. 25.

¹²³ London, SLSA, The Newham Monitoring Project, Racism and Racist Violence, (1990), p. 8.

¹²⁴ Panayi, 'Immigration, Multiculturalism and Racism', p. 247.

been one of its great strengths as no one single community dominated the others. The Church of England took pride in reflecting this complex variety.

The closing decades of the century were to see the expectation of a more welcoming attitude to immigration. It would, however, be over-simplistic to assume racism had disappeared in East London; it had simply mutated. Given the successes of the British National Party in the neighbouring boroughs of Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge, racism was possibly destined to take on a new and more disturbing form as it entered the mainstream political arena. Churches responded with alarm and criticism to this rise in right wing politics. If Newham was becoming more multi-cultural and more overtly religious, it was not a purely Christian revival. New faiths required new places of worship with the need for Mosques, Temples and Gurdwaras. *Ethnic Groups in Newham* (1978) recognized the necessity that many residents now had for new distinctively different religious buildings that were not just centres of spiritual support, but also cultural and social hubs.¹²⁵ However, these cultural groups had been finding it hard to acquire premises. The council had to shoulder some of the responsibility for this as it was unwilling to sell its land and premises.¹²⁶ It was the voluntary sector and Christian groups that had taken a lead in supporting these new communities.¹²⁷ The *Newham Community Renewal Programme*, founded by Clifford Hill, was pioneering in its support of Ugandan Asians coming into the borough in the 1970s when the local authority refused to make housing available.¹²⁸ This new influx of minority groups brought new cultures and religious identities into Newham.

Far from churches losing status and power their influence to some extent grew as public bodies had to take the many faiths of Newham seriously. In *Newham Directory of Religious Groups* (1994), it was estimated that 250 organizations had developed to meet for mutual support and worship.¹²⁹ It was calculated that twenty-five percent of the

¹²⁵ London, SLSA, *Ethnic Groups in Newham Vol.II*. (London Borough of Newham, 1978), p. 1.

¹²⁶ London, SLSA, *Ethnic Groups in Newham Vol.II*. (London Borough of Newham, 1978), p. 7.

¹²⁷ London, SLSA, *Ethnic Groups in Newham Vol.II*. (London Borough of Newham, 1978), p. 5.

¹²⁸ *Newham Recorder*, 15 March 1973, p. 64.

¹²⁹ Smith, *Newham Directory of Religious Groups. 1994-5* (London: Aston Community Involvement Unit, 1994), p. 10.

population of the borough were involved with some faith community.¹³⁰ In one survey thirty percent of those polled claimed they had attended a church or religious centre over a twelve month period and eighteen percent said they had attended in the last week.¹³¹ Far from a place of irreligion, the inner-city could be said to be a cradle of a vibrant collection of faiths.¹³² There was something of a religious revival taking place in the borough, albeit on a moderate scale.

Poverty of plant

Alongside racism, poverty was the most significant issue the churches were to face in their ministry in Newham. It was a defining characteristic of much of their mission work from the late nineteenth century. The assumption that it had been eradicated by the welfare state was far too optimistic. Poverty in Newham touched nearly every aspect of life and to catalogue the totality of its effects would be beyond the scope of this study. One issue that had direct implications for the churches was the continued poverty of its buildings. Poor housing, redundant industrial sites, lack of amenities and, for the Church, an ageing collection of buildings all led to a sense of dereliction and decay in the Newham of the 1960s and 70s. The problem was now seen as slum clearance.¹³³ East Ham had demolished 679 dwellings including 234 temporary dwellings built during the war.¹³⁴ The West Ham *Quinquennial Review* (1962), estimated that there were 12,000 people living in substandard housing.¹³⁵ The borough was running out of suitable land to

¹³⁰ Smith, *Newham Directory of Religious Groups*. 1994-5, p. 11.

¹³¹ Greg Smith, 'The New Ethnic Diversity. The Unsecular City: The Revival of Religion in East London in *Rising in the East?: the regeneration of East London* ed. by T. Butler, M. Rustin and Laurence Wishart (London: University of East London, 1996), pp. 123-145, p. 133.

¹³² Jane Garnett and Alana Harris, 'Sources of the Sacred: Migration, Modernity and Religious Identity' in *Oxford Historian: A magazine of the Faculty of History for Oxford Historians* Vol. VII (the Faculty of History Oxford University, 2009), pp. 16-20, p. 17.

¹³³ London, SLSA, G. E. Smith and T. E. North, Town and Country Planning Act County Borough of West Ham First Quinquennial Review of Council Development Plan (1962), p. 1.

¹³⁴ Anon, *East Ham Official Guide 1960*, p.40.

¹³⁵ The *Stratford Express* continually reported on substandard housing and the 'bright future' of the high-rise. In one issue of there was an article about the ruinous state of one property and the opening ceremony for a 'Revolutionary' new housing scheme, where the mayor christened the building with a pint of beer. *Stratford Express*, 25 September, 1964 p. 5 and p. 16. The darker side to housing included a report of rat infestations in old properties in Plaistow and the creation of a new estate in Manor Park. *Stratford Express*, 16 October, 1964 p. 1 and p. 5.

build on as bomb sites were disappearing under new housing estates.¹³⁶ One answer was the growing trend to build flats. The *Official Guide* (1967), announced the building of flats up to twenty-two stories high.¹³⁷ By then the borough had the largest building programme in London with 2,200 dwellings under construction.¹³⁸ Inspired by Continental initiatives high-rise buildings often did not take into account issues as basic as different weather patterns that made flats age faster in the United Kingdom.¹³⁹ Brian Harris suggested that it did not take long for many of the problems of modern housing developments to become obvious. Little of this information filtered through to those who were responsible for implementing these projects.¹⁴⁰ In a relatively short period these new developments gained reputations not for innovation but deprivation and squalor.¹⁴¹ Clergy living in these areas often became the only professional group left in the inner-city. David Sheppard whilst working at the Mayflower Community Centre in Canning Town describes these housing estates as new one class ghettos.¹⁴²

The check to this enthusiasm for high rises was the four deaths at the Ronan Point disaster that occurred in Canning Town in the early hours of 16 May 1968.¹⁴³ This was a significant blow to those who placed their hopes in flats as an answer to housing problems.¹⁴⁴ Attitudes to housing were changing as Britain was becoming an owner-occupier nation.¹⁴⁵ The 1960s saw a shift from public funded projects to private developers providing most new homes.¹⁴⁶ Significantly, some of the Church developments offered housing for vulnerable groups and St Bartholomew's redevelopment was to include a partnership with a Housing Association.

¹³⁶ London, SLISA, G. E. Smith and T. E. North, Town and Country Planning Act County Borough of West Ham First Quinquennial Review of Council Development Plan (1962), p. 4.

¹³⁷ Anon, *London Borough of West Ham The Official Guide and Directory 1967* (The Suburban and Provincial Association, 1967), p. 74.

¹³⁸ Anon, *London Borough of West Ham The Official Guide and Directory 1967*, (The Suburban and Provincial Association, 1967), p. 74.

¹³⁹ Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*, p. 64.

¹⁴⁰ Chris Harris, 'The Family in Post-war Britain', in *Understanding Post-war British Society* ed. by James Obelkevich, (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 45-57, p. 48.

¹⁴¹ Sandbrook, *White Heat*, p. 596.

¹⁴² David Sheppard, *Built as a City*, p. 162.

¹⁴³ *Stratford Express*, 17 May 1968, p. 1.

¹⁴⁴ Sandbrook, *White Heat*, p. 586.

¹⁴⁵ Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*, p. 195.

¹⁴⁶ Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*, p. 194.

By 1995 the situation had got steadily worse with an estimated 1,200 families who were recorded homeless in the borough and 2,000 families in temporary accommodation.¹⁴⁷ Housing was poor, old and often subdivided to create the same problem of overcrowding West Ham faced in 1945.¹⁴⁸ Thirty-five percent of privately rented housing was deemed unfit.¹⁴⁹ Staggeringly, the report *Focus on Newham* (2002), was still blaming war damage as part of the problem.¹⁵⁰ Poverty continued to be a factor in Newham and by 2001 Newham was the third most deprived borough in inner London just behind Tower Hamlets and Hackney.¹⁵¹

Old buildings, in disrepair, epitomised urban decay and churches were no exception. The continuous theme of oral testimony and documentary evidence indicated the crisis churches were facing with redundant buildings. These were locked for much of the week, expensive to maintain and with little money for repair they symbolised the sense of loss and decline in religion in Newham in the 1970s. It was, however, their rebirth that indicated most clearly the willingness of the Church to maintain its presence in the borough and the skills and resource that Newham could draw upon. Within a decade many of these redundant hulks were to be transformed into community facilities.

The 1990s were seen as a more positive era for Newham with the opportunities that regeneration would bring. *Newham's Royal Docklands, Vision for 2005* (1991), a report on the future of the old Royal Docks, wanted to meet the challenge of changing employment patterns and the restructuring of the labour market.¹⁵² In *Newham's Gateway to Europe*

¹⁴⁷ Anon, *Newham Annual Report*, (London Borough of Newham, 1995), p. 24.

¹⁴⁸ London, SLSA, *Focus on Newham Local People and Local Conditions* (The London Borough of Newham, 2002), p. 47.

¹⁴⁹ London, SLSA, *Focus on Newham Local People and Local Conditions* (The London Borough of Newham, 2002), p. 48.

¹⁵⁰ London, SLSA, *Focus on Newham Local People and Local Conditions* (The London Borough of Newham, 2002), p. 48.

¹⁵¹ London, SLSA, *Focus on Newham Local People and Local Conditions* (The London Borough of Newham, 2002), p. 19.

¹⁵² London, SLSA, *Newham's Royal Docklands Vision for 2005* (London Borough of Newham, 1991), p. 3.

(1994), the borough was preparing for Stratford to become a key station for the Channel Tunnel.¹⁵³

The Church was hardly silent on the subject of regeneration and one response was an article by a former curate of East Ham, the then Bishop of Stepney, Jim Thompson. He was fearful of the divisive nature of the new developments setting new residents against old. The church he felt should be willing to ask difficult questions, challenge assumptions, encourage good practice and resist the de-humanizing influences of exploitation.¹⁵⁴ This thesis indicates the innovative work the churches were involved in regarding their sites. Churches had stolen a march on other bodies in being one of the first organizations to renew their buildings and to continue to do so, on the wave of this wider regeneration until the closing decades of the century.

The Church of England

Where then did the national Church stand in this shifting climate and how did it shape Newham Christians? The 1960s were to see a revolution in theology, pastoral work, confidence, culture and authority. Callum Brown in *The Death of Christian Britain* (2003) argues this was the fundamental point of collapse for the Church.¹⁵⁵ It was, as Paul Welsby noted, the age when traditional beliefs were questioned and abandoned.¹⁵⁶ The collection of articles by academics edited by Alec Vidler, *Soundings; Essays Concerning Christian Understanding* (1962), was followed by John Robinson's more controversial *Honest to God* (1963).¹⁵⁷ These books, that made German Protestant theology available to a wide audience, were not just to unsettle ordinary clergy and lay people's faith but enliven interest in religion. Some felt that secularization had to be faced head on by the Church in works such as Paul Van Buren's *The Secular Meaning of*

¹⁵³ Anon, *Newham Gateway to Europe* (E. J Burrows and Co, 1994), p. 28.

¹⁵⁴ Jim Thompson, *Docklands Redevelopment: a Moral Dimension* (London: The Docklands Forum, 1989), p. 11.

¹⁵⁵ Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 1.

¹⁵⁶ Paul Welsby, *A History of the Church of England 1945-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 99.

¹⁵⁷ John A. T. Robinson, *Honest To God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), p. 41. Paul Van Buren, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel: based on the analysis of its language* (London: SCM Press, 1963), Harvey Cox, *The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective* (London: SCM Press, 1965).

the Gospel (1963), and Harvey Cox's *The Secular City* (1965). Robinson believed this de-mythologized God would be far more attractive to modern humanity than the old super-natural one.¹⁵⁸ This liberal approach was to have implications for Newham churches as these ideas were filtered through projects like St Bartholomew's.

Despite suggestions by some of a religious collapse at this time there were signs in Newham of a church that was still vital. Revolution was taking place in parishes, influenced by South Bank Religion.¹⁵⁹ This movement concentrated on a more radical use of buildings, a more contemporary understanding of pastoral care and believed these were fresh approaches to parochial ministry reflecting a new Reformation.¹⁶⁰ Responding to the growing number of redundant church buildings, Tom Griffin, the Rector of West Ham, surprisingly supported proposals for their wider use: 'We have got to come to terms with changing times and face the situation as it is, however much we may regret it.'¹⁶¹

New movements in spirituality were influencing the Church of England particularly from the Catholic Continent. Michel Quoist's *Prayers of Life* (1963), shaped the Rector of Little Ilford, John Whitwell's spirituality, offering new ways of using traditional religious tools for a modern audience.¹⁶² Significantly, the theology of the Anglican Church was being rooted in the humanity of Christ which meant it was concerned with ordinary people's lives. A leading member of the *Parish and People Movement*, Nigel Porter, the Vicar of St Barnabas', Manor Park, aimed to make Christianity more meaningful and accessible to ordinary people.¹⁶³ There were new visions of what church buildings looked like with the opening of Guilford and Coventry cathedrals in 1961.¹⁶⁴ J. G. Davies' *The*

¹⁵⁸ Paul Van Buren, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel: based on the analysis of its language* (London: SCM Press, 1963), Harvey Cox, *The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective* (London: SCM Press, 1965).

¹⁵⁹ A personal exploration of South Bank Religion can be found in Nicolas Stacey's autobiography *Who Cares*, which explores his time as Rector of St Mary's, Woolwich.

¹⁶⁰ Eric James, *A Life of Bishop John A. T. Robinson, Scholar, Pastor, Prophet* (London: Collins, 1987), p. 136.

¹⁶¹ *Newham Recorder*, 15 February 1973, p. 56.

¹⁶² Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011 and Welsby, *A History of the Church of England 1945-1980*, p. 120.

¹⁶³ There is a fuller history of the movement in Peter J. Jagger, *A History of the Parish and People Movement* (Leighton Buzzard: Faith Press, 1978).

¹⁶⁴ Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity 1920-1990* (London: Collins Fount Paperbacks, 1987), p. 534.

Secular Use of Church Buildings (1968) offered an intellectual and theological justification for more imaginative uses of churches.

Newham was not unaffected by these national trends. Clergy wanted to capture peoples' attention. The *Stratford Express* featured an article about a sermon illustration at St Mark's, Forest Gate, involving a spaceman.¹⁶⁵ On a more serious note the Church wanted to reach out to young people and churches like St Andrew's, Plaistow, opened their buildings up to youth groups.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ *Stratford Express*, 21 February 1964, p. 5.

¹⁶⁶ *Stratford Express*, 17 May 1963, p. 8.

The Paul Report (1964) was featured in the *Stratford Express* when Eric James addressed the Barking Deanery Conference. Issues like declining attendance and the loneliness and frustration of the clergy were topical issues.¹⁶⁷ A new parish for Newham, St John's, North Woolwich, was opened in the early 1960s (Fig 1.5).



Figure 1. 5 St John's, North Woolwich.

The author's collection.

As a church and community centre it had a modernist architectural style. Its aim was to reach beyond its Sunday congregation as Newham grappled with relevance in a modern world. There were even quite revolutionary suggestions for what to do with existing

¹⁶⁷ *Stratford Express*, 25 September 1964, p.15.

churches in Newham. One member of the ancient parish of All Saints West Ham suggested the diocese ‘...hand the church to Newham Borough Council and have a community centre built on the site.’¹⁶⁸

Despite religion still being a topical issue, there was also evidence of a growing dissonance between some church members and local people in the borough’s newspapers. A few clergy in the borough were concerned about the number of parents who wanted their children baptised but did not go to church. Nigel Porter introduced instruction for families which led to a significant reduction of parents seeking baptism for their children in his parish.¹⁶⁹ This resulted in quite heated debate in the columns of the *Stratford Express* that reflected a continuing topicality for religious news.¹⁷⁰ Porter was also one of the liturgical pioneers in the deanery: ‘If worship is to be a meaningful reality, he argued, it must be expressed in contemporary forms.’¹⁷¹ Christians in Newham still struggled with the permissive society. A Newham vicar called for a mass protest against the screening of *Oh Calcutta* in the borough.¹⁷² Revd Gerald Bray, curate of St Cedd’s, Canning Town, spoke out against the marriage of divorcees in church.¹⁷³ Nigel Porter was regularly featured in the local papers with his views on sexual morality and the modern world. Clergy poverty in Newham was a growing concern. One clergy wife led a campaign against VAT on children’s clothes and changes in the family allowance.¹⁷⁴ The *Newham Recorder* asked: ‘Is your priest as poor as a church mouse?’¹⁷⁵

The 1970s were a decade of contrasts for the Church of England. There was growing democratization of its government with the establishment of synodical government in 1970.¹⁷⁶ But with it came a perceived further deterioration of the bond between Church and State.¹⁷⁷ The relocation of Christ as a wholly human figure was brought into the

¹⁶⁸ *Stratford Express*, 1 April 1966, p. 4.

¹⁶⁹ *Stratford Express*, 14 January 1966, p. 1.

¹⁷⁰ *Stratford Express*, 21 January 1966, p. 14.

¹⁷¹ *Newham Recorder*, 15 February 1973, p. 16.

¹⁷² *Newham Recorder*, 18 January 1973, p. 11.

¹⁷³ *Newham Recorder*, 8 November 1979, p. 53.

¹⁷⁴ *Newham Recorder*, 22 March 1973, p. 10.

¹⁷⁵ *Newham Recorder*, 22 March 1973, p. 56.

¹⁷⁶ Welsby, *A History of the Church of England 1945-1980*, p. 149.

¹⁷⁷ Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, p. 606.

popular imagination with dramas such as Dennis Potter's *Son of Man* (1969), the musicals *Godspell* (1970), and *Jesus Christ Super Star* (1973). The period was one of steady numerical decline for the Church. 1,086 Anglican churches were made redundant between 1969 and 1984. In 1976 one church was demolished every nine days.¹⁷⁸

By the close of the century perhaps the most influential of all reports that the Church of England produced on the inner cities, *Faith in the City* (1985), was published. It was born out of a growing sense of concern amongst leading Christian thinkers about the inequalities in British society in the 1980s. It was a challenge to tackle the poverty of the inner cities, and the indifference of those who had the power to change this downward spiral of deprivation.¹⁷⁹ As it said in its title, it was a wake up call for action. Of the thirty-three recommendations made in the report it was the twenty-fifth that was to enable the report to have teeth. The establishment of a Church Urban Fund (CUF) made change viable.¹⁸⁰

Newham made its contribution to the Archbishop of Canterbury's commission in April 1984. The concerns for the deanery included training and deployment of clergy and lay people, the revision of the parish system, community centres with a Christian foundation as tools for outreach. It recommended encouraging Christian professionals to work in the inner-city. They wanted church building regulations relaxed to make it easier to redevelop churches. The conclusions called for the Church of England, and the diocese, to be more inclusive and supportive of its inner-city churches.¹⁸¹

Faith in the City (1985), spawned a series of books that raised the profile of the inner-city from Laurie Green's *Power to the Powerless* (1987), to theological responses to the report such as G. Ahern and G. Davie's *Inner-city God* (1987), and Anthony Harvey's *Theology in the City* (1989). The Liturgical Commission set about producing worship

¹⁷⁸ Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, p. 602.

¹⁷⁹ Richard O'Brien, (Chair) *Faith in the City. A Call for Action by Church and Nation. The Report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas*, (London: Church House Publishing, 1985), p. xiv.

¹⁸⁰ O'Brien, *Faith in the City*, p. 363.

¹⁸¹ London, Fox Archive, Martin Wallace, The Newham Submission. 1984.

resources for the city in *Patterns for Worship* (1989). *Faith in the City* (1985) was to be a controversial document at a period when Church and State relations were strained. Books such as Henry Clark's *The Church under Thatcher* (1993), sought to understand why the Established Church seemed to be constantly in opposition to the Thatcher Government.

In Chelmsford Diocese the CUF was coupled with the London Over the Border Fund, a historic resource used to support Anglican building projects, which enabled the churches of Newham to receive substantial grants in their efforts to modernise. The impetus for change was present long before the publication of *Faith in the City*. The report may not have led the way in Newham but it certainly gave authority to what was being done around the borough. There was a long tradition of settlements and missions in the East End that pioneered community work. The sale of St Alban's, Wakefield Street, in 1979 and the adaptation of its hall into community facilities, worship space and residential flats was to start a trend. Under the leadership of Stephen Lowe St Bartholomew's, East Ham, was transformed into a doctor's surgery, residential flats and community centre in partnership with Springboard Housing and the local Health Authority at a cost of over a £1,000,000.¹⁸² By the end of the century no less than nine churches out of twenty-five had been rebuilt and six substantially redeveloped in the deanery.

Chelmsford Diocese had an active Council for Social Responsibility in the 1990s. It produced a series of reports and study packs for churches on issues relating to poverty and the inner-city. The inner-city was finding a voice that could be listened to by the wider church. These included one for local churches on *Christians, Poverty and Wealth* (1987). There was a submission for the Lambeth conference on the issues of deprivation and social change: *Church and Society in Essex and East London* (1988), and followed by *Community Care and the Churches* (1994). The Church's Standing Committee for London Docklands produced *Housing and the Regeneration of Docklands* (c1996), a direct appeal to the LDDC to put more effort into providing social housing.¹⁸³ The Church in East London was in reflective mood also. It seemed to be empowered enough

¹⁸² *Newham Recorder*, 5 February 1981, p. 11.

¹⁸³ London, Fox Archive, *Housing and the Regeneration of Docklands a report from the Churches Standing Committee for London Docklands* Chaired by Tim Stevens (c1996).

to confidently publicise its achievements. In 1993 the Link Officer for the diocese to the Archbishop's Commission on Urban Priority Areas, Canon Martin Wallace, produced a report *Barking Urban Mission Project* (1993), that looked at how Barking Episcopal Area was responding to the call to urban mission (Fig 1.6).¹⁸⁴

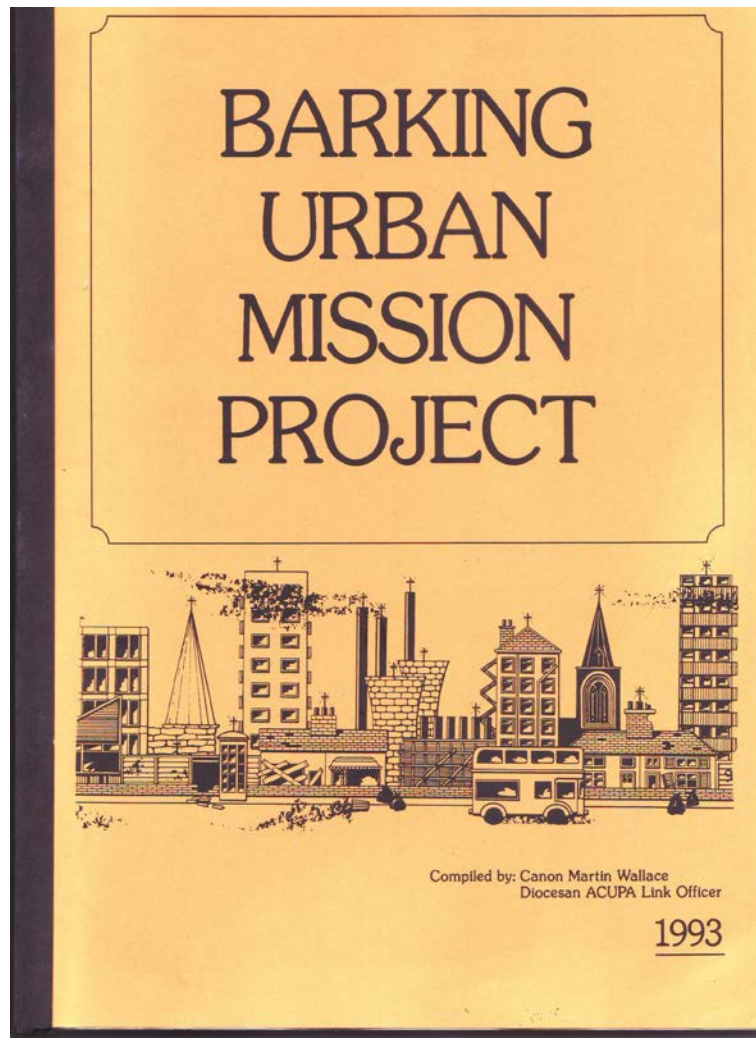


Figure 1.6 Front Cover of the Barking Urban Mission Project outlining the work of the Church Urban Fund in Barking Episcopal Area. The author's collection.

It was a series of articles and reflections on the Church's mission in the inner-city. The contributors came from a spectrum of church traditions. Wallace was an Evangelical and had been vicar of St Mark's, Forest Gate, from 1977 to 1989 and Area Dean from 1982 to

¹⁸⁴ London, Fox Archive, Martin Wallace, Barking Urban Mission Project.

1991.¹⁸⁵ The theology of the report was incarnational, discovering God in the city rather than taking him to the people.¹⁸⁶ It looked at four key areas; community centres, the neighbourhood, children's work and churches work with the unemployed and elderly.¹⁸⁷ It then described the work of these projects, two of which were churches that had completely rebuilt their premises converting part of their site into community centres. St Mark's, Forest Gate, had been open since 1986 replacing a late nineteenth century building. The *Barking Urban Mission Project* quoted them saying; 'ministry and worship has been transformed out of all recognition...' and the building; 'is a real focus of community ministry.'¹⁸⁸ The other church community centre was a collaboration with Aston Charities, St Michael's, Manor Park. Although there were some teething problems there was a sense that the centre was used by a wide variety of groups and 'the opportunities to serve are manifold.'¹⁸⁹

The Church of England continued to experiment with new forms of ministry such as a community priest in Custom House.¹⁹⁰ The Newham Night Shelter ran hostels in local churches for the borough's homeless.¹⁹¹ Individually they were confident enough to come into conflict with powerful local concerns. There were clashes with the council when funding was cut from a conservative Evangelical community centre because it supposedly refused a Muslim organization and a lesbian assertiveness group's use of it premises.¹⁹² More positively Emmanuel, Forest Gate led a campaign to stop two members of their youth project from being deported.¹⁹³ Far from a backwater the inner-city was a training ground for future leaders. Jim Thompson, Stephen Lowe, Tim Stevens and Martin Wallace were all local clergy who became bishops.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁵ *Crockford's Clerical Directory 1991/2, Ninety-second edition* (London: Church House Publishing, 1991), p. 745.

¹⁸⁶ London, Fox Archive, Martin Wallace, Barking Urban Mission Project, p. 19.

¹⁸⁷ London, Fox Archive, Martin Wallace, Barking Urban Mission Project, p. 34ff.

¹⁸⁸ London, Fox Archive, Martin Wallace, Barking Urban Mission Project, p. 64.

¹⁸⁹ London, Fox Archive, Martin Wallace, Barking Urban Mission Project, p. 65.

¹⁹⁰ *Newham Recorder*, 11 January 1990, p. 4.

¹⁹¹ *Newham Recorder*, 16 December 1998, p. 28.

¹⁹² *Newham Recorder*, 1 February 1990, p. 6.

¹⁹³ *Newham Recorder*, 4 November 1998, p. 5.

¹⁹⁴ *Newham Recorder*, 18 November 1998, p. 3.

Conclusion

Newham provides a complex and intimate back drop with which to observe the Church of England. It struggled with relevance at a time when it faced its deepest crisis and most dramatic decline in resources nationally. Yet Newham Christians had developed significant structures to respond to deprivation and maintain a presence in the borough from the early twentieth-century. The model of missions and settlements were to offer a significant inspiration for local parish churches in their changing role. In a community as deprived as Newham secular authorities were increasingly dependant on the work of religious bodies to supplement and in some cases take over their social work. The next chapter will examine how these bodies negotiated the creation of the welfare state and how they influenced the development of community centres created by Church of England.

Chapter Two:

Early models of community development by Christians in Newham

Introduction

The developments that will be examined did not spring from a vacuum. Social engagement by the churches had been a feature of Christian mission in the inner-city for more than a century. The settlement movement was to be a significant testing ground for the churches' future work. This chapter will examine the contribution these institutions made to the life of the borough, the development of thought and practice that shaped later initiatives, the interrelationships that were formed with local church leaders and the origins of a growing belief that faith was expressed not just in worship but service. One area of activity that has been undervalued is the influence faith based East London charities had on local churches. If one looks at Appendix 2 there were at least fifteen organizations including missions, settlements, hostels and community centres directly founded by Christians in Newham. Like the churches these institutions were to face rapid and unparalleled upheaval at the end of the twentieth-century. Like the churches, they confronted the challenge of discovering new roles and new relevance. Finance, recruitment and attitudes were to change as they sought to be more professional, more responsive and welcoming to an increasingly complex clientele in the people of Newham.

The future of churches in Newham was questioned by local Christians in the early 1970s and these parallel institutions seemed to offer an alternative role. The Church could reproduce their work on a smaller scale by the adaptation of their own buildings. This enabled a new form of ministry to develop that gave fresh meaning and vigour to mission and pastoral engagement.

These parallel institutions negotiated the challenges of war and peace. Who were the people who ran them? What were the attitudes and assumptions of staff and clients towards each other? How were they financed and how did they express their Christian

ethos? All this offers an insight into how and why the local church began to adapt. In a relatively tight knit Anglican community in Newham these institutions were able to influence and be influenced by parochial life.

The role of the voluntary sector has changed considerably since the inception of the welfare state in 1945. There has always been a mixed economy of statutory and voluntary social provision in Britain.¹ It was both spheres that gained from short-lived funding increases and struggled in times of economic decline.² It was now the state that was to be the benchmark of care.³ In the midst of these shifting sands the faith-based community projects in Newham had to negotiate a path.

This was in the context of a changing political climate. From the mid-1980s the state, under the Conservative Government, looked to the voluntary sector as a means of lightening its involvement in social services. There was a growing volume of work on their contribution to care. Maria Brenton's *The Voluntary Sector in British Social Services* (1985), Ian Williams' *The Alms Trade* (1989), Jane Lewis' *the Voluntary Sector, the State and Social Work in Britain* (1995), reflected a growing interest in what became known as the third sector.⁴ What was the role of this sector in the light of the government of Margaret Thatcher's attempt to turn back the clock on state involvement in social provision?⁵ There was hostility to government policy evidenced by Stuart Hall's *The Voluntary sector Under Attack?* (1989).⁶ Parallel to this there was a steady stream of government publications beginning with the *Nathan Report* (1953), which examined the place of the voluntary sector in the light of the welfare state.

¹ Jane Lewis, *The Voluntary Sector, the State and Social Work in Britain. The Charity Organisation: Society Family Welfare Association Since 1869* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1995), p. 3.

² Maria Brenton, 'The Voluntary Sector in British Social Services', in *Social Policy in Modern Britain* ed. by J. O. Campling (Harlow: Longmans, 1985), p. 42.

³ Lewis, *The Voluntary Sector, the State and Social Work in Britain*, p. 102.

⁴ Ian Williams, *The Alms Trade. Charities, Past, Present and Future* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

⁵ Brenton, 'The Voluntary Sector in British Social Services', p. 4.

⁶ Stuart Hall, *The Voluntary sector Under Attack?* (Islington Voluntary Action Council, 1989).

The churches' contribution to social care has also been examined. Faughman and Kelleher offered analysis of the faith dominated Irish context.⁷ F. K. Prochaska examined the relationship between Christianity and Social Services in contemporary Britain.⁸ The Church of England itself had produced reports on its relations with the state from *Faith in the City* through to the most recent reports including one chaired by the Rt Revd Stephen Lowe, *Moral, but no Compass*, which examined the Church's involvement in the voluntary sector.⁹

The origins

Some middle class Victorians had a sense of uneasiness about the growth of the city. William Morris' *News from Nowhere* (1890), William Booth's *In Darkest England* (1891), and Jack London's *The People of the Abyss* (1903), pointed to the supposed failure of urban life for both rich and poor. There was a sense that society had been shattered by industrialization and the modern urban world.¹⁰ Social classes no longer lived in the harmony of an 'ordered estate.' The middle and upper classes felt it was their responsibility to repair this rift and university men such as the Oxford academic T. H. Green would give it an intellectual foundation.¹¹ So significant was his contribution to some of the settlements in Newham, there is a memorial to him at the Mansfield House site today. There was also an air of romanticism about such buildings. The Mayflower Centre was clad in mock Tudor timbers that gave it a discordant rustic feel in the heart of Canning Town (Fig 2.1). Meacham, in *Toynbee Hall and Social Reform* (1987), notes

⁷ Pauline Faughman and Patricia Kelleher, *The Voluntary Sector and the State a Study of Organisations in One Region* (Dublin: The Conference of Major Religious Superiors, 1993), p. 15.

⁸ F. K. Prochaska, *Christianity and Social Service in Modern Britain: the Disinherited Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 151.

⁹ Richard O'Brien, (Chair) *Faith in the City. A Call for Action by Church and Nation. The Report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas*, (London: Church House Publishing, 1985), Stephen Lowe, (Chair) *Moral, But No Compass, Government, Church and the Future of Welfare* (Chelmsford: Matthew James Publishing Ltd, 2008).

¹⁰ Standish Meacham, *Toynbee Hall and Social Reform 1880-1914: The Search for Community* (Michigan: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 1ff.

¹¹ Melvin Richter, *The Politics of Conscience. T. H. Green and his age* (London: University Press of America, 1983), p. 14.

much of this social work was rooted in Victorian paternalism that believed in a return to the social bonds of a pre-industrial age.¹²



Figure 2.1 The Offices and Main Entrance to the Mayflower Family Centre, Canning Town. The author's collection.

¹² Meacham, *Toynbee Hall and Social Reform 1880-1914*, p. 1 ff.

Thus there was always a tendency to view these institutions as a means of social control but this was not a strong feature of the movement.¹³ The settlements and missions effectively became the factories of community provision in a poor urban area that would rebuild community cohesion. As an early writer put it:

A settlement is a colony of members of the upper classes, formed in a poor neighbourhood, with the double purpose of getting to know the local conditions of life from personal observation, and of helping where help is needed.¹⁴

The first aim was to bridge the perceived gap in understanding between the working class and the middle and upper classes.¹⁵ The second driving force for this social mixing was the poverty of many urban areas. It was expected that the poor would benefit from this relationship. Money, skills and influence were all now to be employed in these agencies to relieve the destitution of the communities they worked in.

To these two functions could often be added a third, the practical outworking of a faith. It was an age when faith had to be manifest in 'good works'. Anglo Catholics gained respect through their selfless work amongst the urban poor. Evangelical Christianity developed its identity in England through its adoption of causes such as the abolition of the slave trade, the factory acts and temperance movement. Meacham believed the Evangelical emphasis on right actions was almost a preparation for the next world.¹⁶ For missions in Newham, such as the Mayflower, faith was to remain a particular driving force well into the twentieth-century.¹⁷

There was also more than a hint that missions and settlements were established because of the failure of local churches. Werner Picht, in *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement*

¹³ Ruth Hutchinson Crocker, *Social Work and Social Order. The Settlement Movement in Two Industrial Cities, 1889-1930* (Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1992), p. 224.

¹⁴ Werner Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement* trans. by Lillian A. Cowell (London: Bell and Sons. Ltd, 1914), p. 1.

¹⁵ Michael Rose and Anne Woods, *Everything Went on at the Round House, a Hundred Years of the Manchester Settlement* (Manchester, University of Manchester Press, 1995), p. 13.

¹⁶ Meacham, *Toynbee Hall and Social Reform 1880-1914*, p. 12.

¹⁷ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Winter 1963.

Movement (1914), argued that ordinary parochial clergy were unable to cope with the burden of ministering to the poor.¹⁸ Kennedy Cox, head of the Docklands Settlement, in his *Autobiography* (1931), was quite scathing of the ordinary parochial clergy's abilities, believing they had not kept pace with the intellectual developments of the rest of the nation.¹⁹ They were often too reserved or too busy for settlement work.²⁰ In turn those clergy who did develop community based work were criticised because they were perceived to have abandoned their traditional roles.²¹

Whatever the expectations there was something genuinely radical about the mixing of social classes. K. M. Bradley in her thesis 'Poverty and Philanthropy in East London 1918 – 1959' (2006), outlines the influence the settlement movement had on the founders of the welfare state.²² Perhaps the real impact of these projects was in converting men and women like Clement Attlee, William Beveridge and Octavia Hill, to see government intervention as the only effective means of combating urban poverty.

These settlements quickly spread through Britain and North America and were often the pioneers of social reform.²³ They grew up in London over the Border across the river Lea in West Ham. By 1939 there were at least six settlements or missions working in this area alongside a further seven institutions with Christian foundations. Amongst these the most significant were the Felstead School Mission at the Ascension Victoria Docks, Mansfield House University Settlement and its sister project the Canning Town Women's Settlement (CTWS) (Fig 2.2).

¹⁸ Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, p. 2.

¹⁹ Reginald Kennedy Cox, *Through the Dock Gates* (London: Michael Joseph Ltd, 1939), p. 224.

²⁰ Reginald Kennedy Cox, *An Autobiography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1931), p. 97.

²¹ E. H. Patey, (Chair) *Community Work and the Churches: Working Group of the British Council of Churches*, (London: British Council of Churches, 1976), p. 9 Settlements had other roles to play. Kennedy Cox wanted to restore beauty to the drab lives of the poor. Kamal Chunchie a Methodist Evangelist founded the Coloured Men's Institute in 1921 wanted to combat the racism and rejection that returning Black sailors faced in West Ham after the Great War.

²² K.M. Bradley, 'Poverty and Philanthropy in East London 1918 – 1959: The University Settlements and the Urban Working Classes' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 2006).

²³ Hutchinson Crocker, *Social Work and Social Order*, p. 211.



**Figure 2.2 Main entrance of Fairbairn Hall, part of Mansfield House Settlement, Canning Town.
The author's collection.**

What began as the Malvern College Mission became in the 1950s the Mayflower Family Centre. There was the Baptists' flagship of social concern, the West Ham Central Mission. After the war new institutions were established including Aston Charities' Durning and Lawrence Halls, St John's Church and Centre, North Woolwich and the Newham Community Renewal Programme (NCRP).²⁴ It is these institutions that offer an insight into an alternative approach to Christian involvement in the inner-city that paved the way for parish churches in the 1980s and 90s to redevelop their buildings.

Surviving the peace

The settlements and missions faced mixed fortunes during the Second World War. A number were seriously damaged. The Docklands Settlement and Mansfield House were bombed. Durning Hall, originally in Stepney, had to be abandoned after being hit three

²⁴ Colin Marchant, 'Interaction of Church and Society in an East London Borough (West Ham)' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1979), p. 336.

times.²⁵ The old St John's, North Woolwich, was totally destroyed on the first day of the Blitz.²⁶ Even when these organizations were spared major damage the chaos of the war meant, as in the case of the CTWS, neglect of buildings and property that a post-war society had little energy and few resources to make good.²⁷ By the 1950s Docklands Number One Settlement was in such a bad state of repair it was closed, later to be revived as the Mayflower Family Centre.²⁸

Many inter-war activities were suspended which struck at the essential work of the missions and settlements. Subscriptions, which were a fundamental part of settlement and mission funding in the inter-war years, were in some cases significantly hit. Mansfield House's donations could boast a subscription rate of 14,000 in November 1947, but this was 5,000 below the pre-war figure.²⁹ Neighbourhoods were destroyed in the Blitz and the student residents of the settlements, a vital resource in running activities and providing funding, were drying up.³⁰

However, it was also a time of challenge to which many of these agencies readily responded. Katharine Bentley Beaman, in *Women and the Settlement Movement* (1996), indicated some gained a new respect with an increased workload supporting families, administering evacuation work and rationing.³¹ Ties with the local council had been strengthened.³² For others it was a different story. Stepney Borough Council served a compulsory purchase notice on the original Durning Hall in July 1945 forcing them to close the site.³³

²⁵ David Howard, *Our Durning Hall: A 21 Birthday Tribute* (London: Privately Published, 1981), p. 2.

²⁶ London, SLSA, PCC Minute Books of St John's North Woolwich. 28 April 1943.

²⁷ London, SLSA, Annual General Meeting of Mansfield House's Memorial Hall. 14 January 1947.

²⁸ Peter Watherston, *A Different Kind of Church, the Mayflower Family Centre* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1994), p. 30f.

²⁹ London, SLSA, Minute Book of Mansfield House Settlement 6 November 1947.

³⁰ M. D. Stock, *Fifty Years in Every Street, the Story of the Manchester University Settlement* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1945), p. 107.

³¹ Katharine Bentley Beaman, *Women and the Settlement Movement* (London: The Radcliffe Press, 1996), p. 160.

³² Gladys Barrett, *Blackfriars Settlement a Short History 1887-1987* (London: Blackfriars Settlement, 1987), p. 21.

³³ Evelyn Ray Keen, *The Aston Story, A History of Aston Charities Trust Limited* (Privately Published, 1986), p. 45.

There were unanticipated challenges and opportunities faced by the settlements. In some places social barriers that divided the nation before the war seemed to be temporarily suspended.³⁴ Damaged settlement and mission buildings led to students finding accommodation in the actual communities themselves, offering an even greater understanding of urban life, at least during the war.³⁵ Destruction also meant compensation that enabled new building. Mansfield House received £10,000 in compensation in December 1947 because of war damage.³⁶

New relationships were made and there was a growing sense of internationalism that the settlement and mission movement were well placed to foster. The West Ham Central Mission developed an International Club with the Norwegian Government shortly after the war.³⁷

The biggest threat the settlements and missions seemed to feel was not the Blitz but the arrival of the welfare state. With a comprehensive state provision of welfare their roles seemed to have been undermined.³⁸ Almost every settlement that survived spoke of the need to justify their existence. The original function of the buildings seemed to have gone.³⁹ As an early report of the Mayflower Centre put it 'Full employment and the advent of the welfare state have made many feel that there is no great need in such areas'.⁴⁰ The alleviation of poverty was to remain a key to churches maintaining their role in Newham life.

Much of their old financial independences had also gone and they were expected to fall inline with statutory provision, '...the settlement had become dependent upon the good will of the state to an extent which its founders never envisaged...'⁴¹ Work like maternity

³⁴ Stock, *Fifty Years in Every Street*, p. 117.

³⁵ Stock, *Fifty Years in Every Street*, p. 117.

³⁶ London, SLISA, Minutes of the Jubilee Trust. 8 December 1947.

³⁷ Paul Rowntree-Clifford, *Venture in Faith, the Story of the West Ham Central Mission* (London: The Carey Kings Gate Press, 1950), p. 151.

³⁸ Barrett, *Blackfriars Settlement a Short History 1887-1987*, p. 22.

³⁹ Barrett, *Blackfriars Settlement a Short History 1887-1987*, p. 31.

⁴⁰ London, SLISA, Docklands Report of the New Warden, c. 1950. p. 2.

⁴¹ Rose and Woods, *Everything Went on at the Round House*, p. 88.

and child welfare clinics begun by the CTWS were now taken over by the state.⁴² Even their funding could be appropriated for the new National Health Service as was noted in Mansfield's Minute book for 1951.⁴³ The voluntary sector was seen as chaotic, piecemeal, and unprofessional.⁴⁴ Power was now in the hands of central and local government to provide their own structure and agencies.⁴⁵ Perhaps most damning of all, despite their hard work, it was clear that these settlements and missions could only touch the lives of very few in the communities they served compared with a comprehensive state provision.

A continual problem faced by the settlements and missions as part of the voluntary sector was money and volunteers.⁴⁶ They now became dependent on the statutory services providing funding. This was not always forthcoming. The CTWS Annual Report for 1959 typically commented that when they felt their work was increasing and money was in short supply.⁴⁷

These agencies were often forced to change their role.⁴⁸ The CTWS boasted their new nursery 'illustrates the settlement's ability to adapt itself to the changing requirements'.⁴⁹ However, the nursery soon closed because costs were too high and grants from the local authority were not available.⁵⁰

A more successful role that these agencies provided in West Ham was the embryonic Citizens Advice Bureaus. These had been established to cope with the vastly increased bureaucracy the new welfare state had created. They were established at the CTWS,

⁴² London, SLSA, CTWS News and Annual Report 1959. p. 4.

⁴³ London, SLSA, Minute Book of Mansfield House Settlement, 21 March, 1951.

⁴⁴ Prochaska, *Christianity and Social Service in Modern Britain*, p. 150.

⁴⁵ Brenton, 'The Voluntary Sector in British Social Services', p. 17.

⁴⁶ Ann Blackmore, *The Voluntary Sector in a Changing Welfare State. Voices of the Voluntary Sector. Perspectives on Public Policy* (London: The National Council for the Voluntary Sector, 1999), p. 27f.

⁴⁷ London, SLSA, CTWS News and Annual Report 1959. p. 1.

⁴⁸ Stock, *Fifty Years in Every Street*, p. 117.

⁴⁹ London, SLSA, CTWS News and Annual Report 1950. p. 2.

⁵⁰ London, SLSA, CTWS News and Annual Report 1960. p. 3.

Mansfield House and Durning Hall.⁵¹ West Ham Mission even felt that its role was beginning to expand.⁵²

Quite early on there were recognized gaps in the state provision. The settlements and missions responded to the elderly, the disabled, family support and the growing concern for youth provision.⁵³ As early as 1952 the CTWS was reporting on the elderly facing a lonely existence not catered for by the welfare state.⁵⁴ Mansfield House set up a meal service for the elderly partly subsidised by the council.⁵⁵ They settled into a new role of pioneering work they hoped would be taken over by the state. CTWS said: 'the voluntary body reveals the pressing need and then attempts to fill the gap, stimulated by the hope that eventually a further statutory service will be established'.⁵⁶

There was an additional change in role when from the 1960s when poverty was 'rediscovered' and state provision alone was no longer seen as sufficient. The voluntary sector was increasingly expected to take over where the state sector provision fell short. Through books like Townsend's *The Family Life of Older People* (1963), and Abel-Smith and Townsend *The Poor and the Poorest* (1965), the state had to admit that poverty was not being eradicated. It was estimated that nearly five percent of the national population were defined as poor in 1953; this had risen to over fourteen percent by 1960.⁵⁷ Local voluntary bodies were well placed to point out those they came across who fell through the gaps of state provision. The Mayflower recorded their work with a couple who were both illiterate in 1964.⁵⁸

⁵¹ London, SLSA, CTWS News and Annual Report 1950. p. 2.

⁵² Rowntree-Clifford, *Venture in Faith, the Story of the West Ham Central Mission*, p. 158.

⁵³ Eileen Younghusband, Ed. 'Community Work and Social Change the Report of a Study Group on training set up by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation' (Harlow: Longman, 1968), p. 18, Brenton, 'The Voluntary Sector in British Social Services', p. 23.

⁵⁴ London, SLSA, CTWS News and Annual Report 1952. p. 4.

⁵⁵ London, SLSA, Minute Book of Mansfield House Settlement, 12 April, 1961.

⁵⁶ London, SLSA, CTWS News and Annual Report 1960. p. 2.

⁵⁷ Julie Rugg, 'Poverty and Social Exclusion' in *Twentieth-century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change*, ed. by Paul Johnson, Francesca Carnevali and Julie-Marie Strange 2 edn, (Harlow: Longman, 2007), (Harlow: Pearson Longman 2 Edition, 2007), pp. 308-322, p. 311.

⁵⁸ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Winter 1964.

There was a growing respect for the voluntary sector. There were new partnerships formed as in the case of St John's, North Woolwich, with Newham Council.⁵⁹ They were now seen as more innovative.⁶⁰ They were viewed as experts in their own particular fields and were able to meet needs not met by the state.⁶¹

As the century wore on the welfare state faced increasing criticism. The fracturing of social ties that united working-class communities added to a perceived dependency culture.⁶² The voluntary sector was seen as an important foil to the over arching power of state provision. Criticisms of paternalism and restriction, once aimed at the voluntary sector were now levelled at the state.⁶³ The very comprehensiveness of welfare provision was being attacked because some felt it led to dependency and lethargy.⁶⁴ The creation of the Newham Community Renewal Programme (NCRP), in 1970 was, in part a response to the widening gaps in state provision.⁶⁵

Personnel and management

The leadership of these agencies was changing. Initially, men such as David Sheppard and Roger Sainsbury came from conventionally middle class background but increasingly it was felt that a wider social spectrum was needed in these institutions. Under their leadership new voices were heard. Both wars had meant much more social contact between different classes. The middle classes were changing their attitudes and those from more proletarian backgrounds were now taking leadership roles from the 1960s. This meant that attitudes towards the poor began to change. Change seemed to be slow at first. David Sheppard had a very conventional middle class upbringing. The son of a solicitor, he was educated at Sherborne School and Trinity College Cambridge.⁶⁶

⁵⁹ London, SLSA, *Essex Churchman*, October 1969.

⁶⁰ Blackmore, *The Voluntary Sector in a Changing Welfare State*, p. 23.

⁶¹ Blackmore, *The Voluntary Sector in a Changing Welfare State*, p. 20f.

⁶² Chris Harris, 'The Family in Post-war Britain', in *Understanding Post-war British Society* ed. by James Obelkevich, (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 45-57, p. 49.

⁶³ Ian Williams, *The Alms Trade. Charities*, p. 176.

⁶⁴ Watherston, *A Different Kind of Church*, p. 12.

⁶⁵ London NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report 1972. p. 2.

⁶⁶ David Sheppard, *Steps Along Hope Street. My Life in Cricket, the Church and the Inner City* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2002), p. 7ff.

Roger Sainsbury, warden of the Mayflower in the 1970s contrasted his upbringing to the surroundings of Canning Town:

As a child I lived in Wendover, three miles from the Prime Minister's country residence in the Chilterns and I went to University in Cambridge. The contrast in living conditions made me want to weep.⁶⁷

The school missions could in theory draw upon old boys for their leadership. Kennedy Cox was at Malvern School when he first came to Canning Town. In reality, this happened rarely. Nigel Copsey worked at Ascension in the early 1980s and was the first Felstead old boy there for nearly seventy years.⁶⁸

Increasingly, however, these institutions were drawing in people from wider social backgrounds. The founder of the West Ham Central Mission's was Robert Rowntree Clifford, the son of a shipwright from the North of England.⁶⁹ He studied for the ministry at evening classes after finishing his own apprenticeship in the Sunderland ship yards.⁷⁰ The foundation of the Barking Road Mission was his first appointment from Regent's Park College.⁷¹

George Burton, who was to be an influential member of the Mayflower's staff, grew up in a working class district of Glasgow at the height of the depression.⁷² As Sheppard was to write later, people like George Burton were crucial because they understood the context and could 'speak the language' of the disaffected.⁷³

⁶⁷ Roger Sainsbury, *Justice on the Agenda* (Hants: Marshall Pickering, 1985), p. 7.

⁶⁸ Essex, Felstead School Mission Annual Report 1987. p. 14.

⁶⁹ Rowntree-Clifford, *Venture in Faith, the Story of the West Ham Central Mission*, p. 8.

⁷⁰ Rowntree-Clifford, *Venture in Faith, the Story of the West Ham Central Mission*, pp. 10-12.

⁷¹ Rowntree-Clifford, *Venture in Faith, the Story of the West Ham Central Mission*, p. 16.

⁷² George Burton, *People Matter More Than Things* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965), p. 16.

⁷³ Sheppard, *Steps Along Hope Street*, p. 42.

Like Burton before him Pip Wilson, the youth worker at the Mayflower in the 1970s, came from a working-class family from Lancashire.⁷⁴ Roy Trevivian, the chaplain at the Mayflower in the late 1970s, was a former warehouse packer and also from Lancashire.⁷⁵ Jimmy Froud, who was to eventually run Aston Charities, was ordained in Hong Kong in 1954 without the conventional degree or theological college training.⁷⁶ Colin Marchant, the head of the West Ham Central Mission and later Aston Charities, worked at Smithfield Meat Market before he trained for the Baptist Ministry. Chris Miller, the warden of St John's in the late 1970s, was born in Walthamstow, trained as a teacher, had a variety of careers before coming to North Woolwich.⁷⁷ As will be explored in chapters Three and Four, Anglican clergy drawn to Newham increasingly came from a wide social pool.

Given the challenges faced by working in East London a number of these key workers had quite unusual career paths. Jimmy Froud worked with refugees from Communist China before Aston.⁷⁸ Burton had a career in the army as a military policeman working with political prisoners in Cyprus.⁷⁹ Pip Wilson had worked in an Approved School and for the YMCA as well as in a challenging youth club for five years before Mayflower.⁸⁰

The work the residents did in these agencies often enhanced their future career paths. In 1961 Mayflower gave a breakdown of who had lived in their residential accommodation and where they had moved to. They estimated that nineteen had been ordained, nine worked in factories, sixteen had been or were teachers, five were to become teachers, eleven future social workers, probation officers or club leaders, seven went into the medical profession, five to the University of London, six in the City and nine came from overseas.⁸¹ The Revd Peter Turner, vicar of St George's, East Ham, was a resident of the

⁷⁴ P. Wilson, *Gutter Feelings: Christian youth work in the inner-city* (London: Marshalls, 1985), p. 12.

⁷⁵ *Newham Recorder*, 2 February 1978, p. 47.

⁷⁶ *Chelmsford Diocesan Year Book 1973-74* (Chelmsford: Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd, 1973), p. 34.

⁷⁷ London, SLISA, S. J. News From St John's Church, December 1979.

⁷⁸ Ray Keen, *The Aston Story*, p. 47.

⁷⁹ Burton, *People Matter More Than Things*, p. 18.

⁸⁰ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Spring 1975.

⁸¹ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Spring 1961.

Mayflower settlement before working in the borough for more than twenty years. John Whitwell recalled years later how impressed he was with his experience of St Margaret's House, Bethnal Green in the early 1960s.⁸²

Mayflower managed a considerable number of ordinands who use the building as a form of preparation before ministry.⁸³ Even as late as the 1980s Mansfield House had residents that included two English ordinands and a German student from a theological college.⁸⁴ The practical experience of those involved in these organizations was seen of real importance: 'they go on to different callings, often in the Church, but always better equipped to face life and its problems.'⁸⁵

There are few stories of how the clients of these institutions were affected, but one such was Jim Gosling's. He was a local lad who through the work of the Mayflower took over the Judo classes, learnt to swim, drive a car, learnt first aid and became a key worker.⁸⁶ It was not uncommon for people to stay in the area and move through the institution. Paul Regan who was head of NCRP and later head of Aston began his career in East London employed as a Methodist youth evangelist for NCRP in the early 1970s. One result of when local people did 'better themselves' was they often moved out of the area.⁸⁷

Quite early on these projects became testing grounds for the churches leaders. George Lansbury believed that settlements were a means of furthering careers on the backs of the poor.⁸⁸ It is true that a number of people associated with these projects did go on to higher roles in their church such as David Sheppard as Bishop of Liverpool, Colin Marchant as the President of the Baptist Union and Roger Sainsbury as Archdeacon of West Ham and then Bishop of Barking, but this also meant that their experience filtered through to the wider church.

⁸² Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

⁸³ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Summer 1963.

⁸⁴ London, SLSA, Mansfield House University Settlement Annual Report. 1984. p. 18ff.

⁸⁵ London, SLSA, *News from the Mayflower*, October 1978. p. 2.

⁸⁶ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Autumn. 1962.

⁸⁷ Sheppard, *Steps Along Hope Street*, p. 56.

⁸⁸ R. Beer and C. A. Pickford, *Eighty Years on Bow Common: The Fern Street Settlement* (London: privately published, 1985), p. 1.

The mixing of classes did cause tension. George Burton lamented that the residents of the settlements were almost always drawn in his day from middle class backgrounds where class norms and values were often confused with gospel values.⁸⁹ The relationships between staff members could be at times quite volatile. When David Sheppard first moved to the Mayflower, as an Evangelical he came into conflict with the old warden David Minton.⁹⁰ There was a total breakdown in communications between the wardens of Mansfield House's Boys Settlement and CTWS in the mid-1950s that was never to be adequately repaired.⁹¹ David Sheppard understatedly said staff meetings at the Mayflower were 'frequently lively affairs.'⁹²

Staff turnover could be considerable. In one year alone NCRP lost eight members of its staff.⁹³ The first warden of Durning Hall only lasted three years.⁹⁴ To ease the pressure on staff the Mayflower introduced sabbaticals for its workers.⁹⁵ However, breakdowns in mental and physical health did occur.⁹⁶ This could spill out into alcoholism, financial problems, or family breakdown.⁹⁷ At its most serious it could include criminal activity. The warden of the CTWS was dismissed in 1947 because of irregularities over managing a clothing club.⁹⁸ More serious was the scandal that almost ruined Mansfield House when its warden was convicted of child abuse in 1962.⁹⁹

Another way that these institutions were changing was in the make-up of their management, although involving locals was a slow process. The church had been criticised for its old fashioned ideas and a lack of democracy.¹⁰⁰ Mayflower did not feel

⁸⁹ Burton, *People Matter More Than Things*, p. 22.

⁹⁰ Watherston, *A Different Kind of Church*, p. 34.

⁹¹ London, SLISA, Minute Book of Mansfield House Settlement 23 February, 1953.

⁹² Burton, *People Matter More Than Things*, p. 12.

⁹³ London NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report November, 1975. p. 9.

⁹⁴ London, SLISA, Minutes of Durning Hall Committee, 4 October, 1956.

⁹⁵ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Winter, 1961.

⁹⁶ Watherston, *A Different Kind of Church*, p. 59.

⁹⁷ Watherston, *A Different Kind of Church*, p. 15.

⁹⁸ London, SLISA, Annual General Meeting of Mansfield House's Memorial Hall, 24 January, 1947.

⁹⁹ *Stratford Express*, 20 July 1962. p. 1.

¹⁰⁰ E. H. Patey, (Chair) *Community Work and the Churches: Working Group of the British Council of Churches*, (London: British Council of Churches, 1976), p. 7f.

confident enough to have a local management committee until 1967.¹⁰¹ Others were more innovative. Durning Hall had a management committee from the 1950s to which the warden responded to. It had involved the local community in planning Durning Hall as early as the 1950s.¹⁰² From its beginnings NCRP had a board of directors that was drawn from local community leaders including clergy from the Anglican, Baptist and Pentecostal churches.¹⁰³

Increasingly, these institutions reflected a leadership that was not too different from the local community. It was one that was increasingly concerned to understand and respond to local issues rather than imposing assumptions and attitudes on them. It is not always clear how successful they were in this endeavour but the will to involve local people was there.

Attitudes and assumptions

Gradually these institutions began to change their often dismissive attitude to the poor. There were still negative attitudes to those the settlements came in contact with but where the voice of leaders who had come from humbler backgrounds was recorded attitudes were not so dismissive. Moreover, the middle classes, as they genuinely engaged with their clients began to respect aspects of their lives. The censorious nature of some of the early workers was clear. The warden of Durning Hall in 1955 reported to the management committee that one young man was causing so many problems for his parents because he was 'brought up with too much love and too little strap.'¹⁰⁴ The warden of the CTWS was clearly frustrated with the lack of financial planning demonstrated by locals. This was particularly true during the post-war boom with easy credit and the problems of debt.¹⁰⁵ Apathy from locals was another issue that staff

¹⁰¹ Watherston, *A Different Kind of Church*, p. 58.

¹⁰² Howard, *Our Durning Hall*, p. 6.

¹⁰³ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report November 1991-92. p. 22.

¹⁰⁴ London, SLSA, Minutes of Durning Hall Committee, 24 November, 1955.

¹⁰⁵ London, SLSA, CTWS News and Annual Report 1959. p. 8.

faced.¹⁰⁶ The Mayflower was constantly complaining about the lack of volunteers for projects.¹⁰⁷

Often the settlement and mission workers seem to have been quite shocked by the perceived immorality of local people. The Mayflower had to contend with delinquent behaviour from those who attended its youth club. Locals appeared to have little knowledge of religion.¹⁰⁸ A theme that occurs in all varieties of literature was the assumptions the settlements and missions were set in a pagan world.¹⁰⁹ The analogy of Christians working in a mission field every bit as challenging as Africa or India was a popular one.¹¹⁰ The image of the pagan was used by the West Ham Mission in the 1950s.¹¹¹ They even went so far as to employ an ex-missionary from New Guinea to develop their women's work.¹¹² George Burton describes work in Canning Town like that of a foreign missionary who builds up his local church.¹¹³

Consumerism was another criticism levelled at locals. As *The Log of the Mayflower* records:

They are proud of their homes and want to improve them with washing machines, fridges and TV sets. They think these things are more important than spiritual things, and there is no tradition of church-going in this area. People seem to think that they have no need of God and that it is a waste of time to go to church.¹¹⁴

It was easy to condemn the growing consumerism of the 1960s when wealth and possessions had been a given in a middle class home for generations. What was often

¹⁰⁶ Barrett, *Blackfriars Settlement a Short History 1887-1987*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁷ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Winter, 1965.

¹⁰⁸ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Spring, 1959.

¹⁰⁹ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Summer, 1963.

¹¹⁰ Sheppard, *Steps Along Hope Street*, p. 66.

¹¹¹ Rowntree-Clifford, *Venture in Faith, the Story of the West Ham Central Mission*, p. 42.

¹¹² Rowntree-Clifford, *Venture in Faith, the Story of the West Ham Central Mission*, p. 150.

¹¹³ Burton, *People Matter More Than Things*, p. 31.

¹¹⁴ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Autumn, 1960.

overlooked was the fact many East Londoners were simply trying to acquire what the wealthy took for granted.

Delinquent behaviour of the young was an increasing concern. The parish minutes of St John's, North Woolwich, in 1960 said there were a 'few rebels' in their Wednesday night youth club.¹¹⁵ Very shortly after Durning Hall was opened there were laments that equipment and rooms were ill used by patrons.¹¹⁶ Damage to property was a concern for the Mayflower as well.¹¹⁷ This was not just a problem with boys but gangs of girls as early as 1961 at the Mayflower.¹¹⁸ Despite the best efforts of the groups' organizers there were problems at club meetings.¹¹⁹ This was partly due to the fact that many of these clubs were working with young people who could not be accommodated within mainstream youth provision and an indication that social attitudes were changing and deference was no longer to be expected.¹²⁰

This created a bleak picture of the inner-city. Mayflower's employees in 1978 were described as working against 'a tidal wave of hell...'¹²¹ Pip Wilson records the growing gang culture that spilled out into open violence. Groups were coming into the youth club armed with knives, hammers, and a bayonet.¹²² It was not unusual for him to take refuge under the desk in his office. Workers would also feel anxious about even visiting local people, indicative of the gulf that they and locals must have experienced at times.¹²³

Perceptions of local people were less critical from those who knew their background as George Burton did. He felt the local people were open but were from a non-book culture. Life was lived each day as it came with little thought for the future. Much of the organization that came with middle class values was lost on them.¹²⁴ This was an issue

¹¹⁵ London, SLSA, Parish Minutes of Easter Vestry, St John's North Woolwich, 28 April, 1960.

¹¹⁶ London, SLSA, Minutes of Durning Hall Committee, 11 January 1955.

¹¹⁷ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Spring, 1966.

¹¹⁸ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Winter, 1961.

¹¹⁹ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Winter, 1964.

¹²⁰ Barrett, *Blackfriars Settlement a Short History 1887-1987*, p. 24.

¹²¹ London, Marchant Archive, *News from the Mayflower*, April 1978. p. 2.

¹²² Wilson, *Gutter Feelings*, p. 36.

¹²³ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Spring, 1964.

¹²⁴ Burton, *People Matter More Than Things*, p. 29.

that the parishes were to wrestle with well into the 1980s as Simon Law reflected on the social expectations that came with church life for some of his congregation.¹²⁵

In a welfare state support was increasingly seen as a right rather than a gift and this changed perceptions. Sheppard highlighted the demeaning nature of charity: 'Churches never solved the dilemma of how to give relief without patronising and without encouraging dependence.'¹²⁶

On a more positive note Canning Town people were often seen as friendly.¹²⁷ One teacher, a resident of Mayflower, interviewed in the early 1960s first felt she had little in common with local people but they were now real friends.¹²⁸ At Durning Hall Jimmy Froud was able to offer an open house policy.¹²⁹ For some there was recognition that the way to forge relationships and build lasting foundations was through trust and shared responsibility.¹³⁰

By the 1960s and 70s there was a more critical assessment of middle class values amongst projects workers. Brian Seaman, of the Mayflower said the 'There is a gulf between the modern generation and the Church. This generation sees the Church as traditional, established, affluent, privileged and irrelevant.'¹³¹

If this was how the staff perceived the locals, what was the local perception of the settlements and missions? At times the Church had faced more than indifference. In some parts of the country it was now facing open hostility because there seemed to be no connection between church and people.¹³²

¹²⁵ Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

¹²⁶ David Sheppard, *Built as a City: God and the Urban World Today* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1974), p. 91.

¹²⁷ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Summer, 1963.

¹²⁸ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Summer, 1961.

¹²⁹ Ray Keen, *The Aston Story*, p. 53.

¹³⁰ Anon, *Mansfield House Settlement, 1932: The Story of Mansfield House* (London: Mansfield House), p. 15.

¹³¹ *Newham Recorder*, 23 November 1972, p. 58.

¹³² Samuel Well, *Community Led Regeneration and the Local Church* (Cambridge: Grove Pastoral Series, 2003), p. 7.

There was a perception that staff were ‘largely foreigners to the district they sought to serve...’¹³³ Mayflower at one time was choosing settlement residents from Christian Unions, Ladies Bible Colleges, and Oxford University.¹³⁴ They were perceived to be naive by the street wise young locals.¹³⁵ One volunteer at the Mayflower said that it took a long time for the children to accept the volunteers. The ‘Oxford accent’ was also a bar.¹³⁶

Yet East London was also a place that accepted the troubles of the middle classes who came to serve them. David Sheppard’s wife Grace faced significant health problems whilst David worked at the Mayflower and the locals could be seen to have absorbed those problems as all part of wider East End life.¹³⁷

Negative reactions were not reserved for local East Londoners, also other professional bodies such as the council and the local churches were suspicious of these powerful, relatively well funded and resource organizations that established themselves on their patch.¹³⁸ Community relationship needed to be formed with the local churches when the new Durning Hall was built in the late 1950s.¹³⁹ Despite these failings it was clear that many of the groups met with a welcome response and were used by large numbers of people for all sorts of activities.¹⁴⁰

¹³³ Rowntree-Clifford, *Venture in Faith: the Story of the West Ham Central Mission*, p. 43.

¹³⁴ Watherston, *A Different Kind of Church*, p. 37.

¹³⁵ Wilson, *Gutter Feelings*, p. 42.

¹³⁶ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Summer, 1960.

¹³⁷ Sheppard, *Steps Along Hope Street*, p. 41.

¹³⁸ Sheppard, *Steps Along Hope Street*, p. 56.

¹³⁹ London, SLISA, Minutes of Durning Hall Committee, 7 February, 1957.

¹⁴⁰ Sheppard, *Steps Along Hope Street*, p. 47.

Finance

Finance was a critical resource for these agencies. Much of the literature that survives was linked with fundraising, from information sheets to annual reports.¹⁴¹ With the arrival of state provision through taxes the sources of voluntary sectors funding seemed undermined. As early as the 1950s the *Nathan Report* (1953), recognized the increase in taxation meant that sources of revenue were drying up for these agencies.¹⁴² This was a far cry from the beginning of the century when the voluntary sector was actually outstripping government provision.¹⁴³

However, these bodies drew in much-needed alternative streams of funding that were additional to state provision. As the century wore on they themselves became increasingly dependent on state sponsored work due to rising inflation and spiralling costs. This led in turn to a changing power structure. Funding was often uncertain. Mayflower was constantly going overdrawn by as much as £3,000, a significant sum for 1959.¹⁴⁴ It was only bailed out of one crisis by a donation from a generous benefactor.¹⁴⁵ The NCRP's Trinity Community Centre boasted that they did not know where money was coming from but simply ran things in the hope it would arrive.¹⁴⁶ There were three distinct sources of funding for these organizations; money they raised themselves, charitable grants and state funding. Settlements originally had their own unique source of funding through rent from the residents. This was to decline as the flow of students dried up. As class distinctions began to break down in one area other social barriers were raised as the middle classes withdrew from the inner-city.

Mansfield House depended partly on individual subscribers to their work which before the war totalled 19,000 people.¹⁴⁷ This figure was to fluctuate over the next decades with

¹⁴¹ London, SLSA, Minute Book of Mansfield House Settlement, 24 July, 1945.

¹⁴² London, SLSA, CTWS News and Annual Report 1950. p. 3.

¹⁴³ Lewis, *The Voluntary Sector, the State and Social Work in Britain*, p. 1.

¹⁴⁴ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Winter, 1959.

¹⁴⁵ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Winter, 1961.

¹⁴⁶ London, SLSA, The Trinity Centre Information Sheet, c. 1970s.

¹⁴⁷ London, SLSA, Minute Book of Mansfield House Settlement, 6 November, 1947.

a drop to 13,560 in 1960.¹⁴⁸ By 1985 Felstead School Mission's subscribers were less than 100.¹⁴⁹ Yet they were still able to give £50,000 towards repairs to the parish church in 1995.¹⁵⁰

These subscriptions were at first quite substantial. Mayflower received £835 in donations in August 1966, in September £1,025 and in October £1,131.¹⁵¹ Rarely did these methods of fundraising by subscriptions survive beyond the 1980s although in the case of the Felstead School Mission it was still bringing in £524 in 1985.¹⁵² When a project was so closely associated with an individual it was inevitable that when they moved on, income would drop. By 1971 when Sheppard had left Mayflower it was facing a financial crisis.¹⁵³ After the sex scandal at Mansfield House the subscriptions collapsed.

The early 1970s saw an increase in funding to the voluntary sector from central government, from two and a half million in 1971 to twenty million between 1975 and 1976.¹⁵⁴ Despite wanting to remain independent the voluntary sector became increasingly reliant on grants from the state. They had never entirely been independent. In its early days Mayflower's income came partly from the Education Authority and partly through charities such as the City Parochial Fund.¹⁵⁵ Early funding to projects like the CTWS included the British Council of Churches.¹⁵⁶ St John's received funding from local industry, the Department of Education and Science and the council.¹⁵⁷ NCRP was receiving grants from Newham Council, the British Council of Churches, Christian Action, the Goldsmith Company, and the Diocese of Chelmsford as well as from

¹⁴⁸ London, SLSA, Minute Book of Mansfield House Settlement, 13 October, 1960.

¹⁴⁹ Essex, The Felstead School Mission Annual Report, 1985, p. 7.

¹⁵⁰ Ascension Miscellaneous Papers.

¹⁵¹ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Winter, 1966.

¹⁵² Essex, The Felstead School Mission Annual Report, 1985, p. 8.

Institutions like Mansfield House were nationally respected bodies and could draw on a wide range of individuals and charities for support. Their accounts indicate a significant income and reserve at least in the 1950s. Just one fund, the Golden Jubilee Trust had £62,000 in it in 1954. This was to rise to £130,000 in 1960. In the late 1940s they had invested in stock around the Commonwealth and Empire, from Australia to Southern Rhodesia. It was this type of income that would suffer much through increasing inflation.

¹⁵³ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Winter/Spring, 1972.

¹⁵⁴ Brenton, 'The Voluntary Sector in British Social Services', p. 43.

¹⁵⁵ London, SLSA, Docklands Report. 1957, p. 7.

¹⁵⁶ London, SLSA, CTWS News and Annual Report 1964. p. 4.

¹⁵⁷ *Newham Recorder*, 31 October 1968, p. 50.

individuals and churches in Newham.¹⁵⁸ Grants also came from the Government's Urban Aid Scheme for part of its work in 1972.¹⁵⁹ Some organizations like the early members of NCRP wanted their funds to come almost exclusively from Christian sources as a way of maintaining control and identity.¹⁶⁰ By the mid-70s the Renewal Programme was being funded through the Rank Foundation, the Docklands Joint Committee, the Home Office, Newham Council, CMS, the Methodist Missionary Society, as well as four Free churches and the Church of England.¹⁶¹ The Ascension was applying for grants from Urban Aid for Docklands to refurbish their community buildings in the late 1970s.¹⁶² Durning Hall simply ran at a loss supported by the income from Aston Charities.¹⁶³ These alternative revenue streams were latterly to be expertly tapped by local churches like St Bartholomew's.

These charities had to raise funds for three distinct areas; the individual projects, salaries and building. As the century wore on these costs were to escalate. By 1962 it was estimated that it needed £750 per month to run the Mayflower Centre, about £9,000 a year.¹⁶⁴ In 1972 the Mayflower's estimated budget had risen to £33,878.¹⁶⁵ By 1978 it was £58,500 a year.¹⁶⁶ From very simple origins the NCRP had a budget of three quarters of a million pounds in the early 1980s.¹⁶⁷ By 2001 it was re-branded as the Renewal Programme and had a turnover of £3,000,000.¹⁶⁸

It was the staffing costs that were to be a constant drain on these organizations. The salary of the warden of Mansfield House's in 1952 was £600 and by the next decade this

¹⁵⁸ London NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report November, 1972, p. 7.

¹⁵⁹ London NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report November, 1972, p. 17.

¹⁶⁰ London NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report November, 1973.

¹⁶¹ London NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report November, 1976. p. 14.

¹⁶² Essex, Felstead School Mission Annual Report, 1977, p. 10.

¹⁶³ Ray Keen, *The Aston Story*, p. 59.

¹⁶⁴ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Winter, 1962.

¹⁶⁵ London, Marchant Archive, *The Church its Leaders*, 1971, p. 5.

¹⁶⁶ London, SLSA, *News from the Mayflower Family Centre*, October 1978, p. 4.

¹⁶⁷ London NCRPA, NCRP A Look Back at 22 Years.

¹⁶⁸ London NCRPA Renewal Programme Annual Report. 2000-1. Introduction.

was to more than double.¹⁶⁹ Salaries for Mansfield House's Women's Settlement rose from £884 in 1960 to £2,674 in 1965.¹⁷⁰

Building work was also a considerable cost to these agencies. The initial building may have been paid for by the donor institution as in the case of the Felstead School Mission.¹⁷¹ However, building work was an ongoing cost. Mayflower had a repair bill of £37,000 in the late 1950s.¹⁷² Some like the new St John's, North Woolwich, were able to draw on the expertise and some of the resources of major industry in the parish.¹⁷³ Even then the total cost of the project in 1968 was £115,000.¹⁷⁴ In the mid-1980s Mansfield House embarked on a major fundraising project of a million pounds to provide adequate buildings for a changing role.¹⁷⁵ Most funds came from outside of the area but by 1968 residents of Silver Town and North Woolwich were expected to raise £2,000 towards the costs of their new church and centre.¹⁷⁶ In 1978 the Mayflower embarked on an ambitious plan that was estimated to cost £870,000, £570,000 had to be met by Mayflower raising capital alone.¹⁷⁷

The financial crisis of 1976 hit both statutory and voluntary sector with a significant reduction in public spending.¹⁷⁸ This was why NCRP believed there was renewed interest in collaboration between the council and the Programme in 1975.¹⁷⁹ Inflation was one cause of the crisis at the Mayflower at the time.¹⁸⁰ By the 1980s there were further cutbacks in state funding. The government had introduced legislation which withdrew some entitlements from young people that threatened NCRP activities.¹⁸¹ This was

¹⁶⁹ London, SLSA, Minutes of the Jubilee Trust, 28 January 1952.

¹⁷⁰ London, SLSA, Mansfield House Women's Settlement Correspondence 1961 to 1966.

¹⁷¹ History of the Church of the Ascension, 2002. p. 5.

¹⁷² Watherston, *A Different Kind of Church*, p. 31.

¹⁷³ There is a fascinating article about the foundation of a very early school mission in North Woolwich linked with Thring of Uppingham in the 1860s in M. Tozer, 'The Readiest hands and the most open hearts: Uppingham's first mission to the poor' in *History of Education* Vol. 18. (1989), pp. 323-332.

¹⁷⁴ London, SLSA, Tate and Lyle Times. Christmas, 1968. p. 12.

¹⁷⁵ London, SLSA, Mansfield House University Settlement Annual Report. 1984. p. 2.

¹⁷⁶ London, SLSA, Free Ferry. Sample First Edition 1967.

¹⁷⁷ London, SLSA, *News from the Mayflower Family Centre*. October 1978. p. 4.

¹⁷⁸ Jerry White, *London in the Twentieth-century: A City and Its People* (London: Penguin 2002), p. 77.

¹⁷⁹ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report November 1975. p. 8.

¹⁸⁰ London, Marchant, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Winter/Spring. 1972.

¹⁸¹ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report, November 1988, p. 12.

compounded when in 1987 Newham Council was to be rate-capped and had to reduce its grants to the voluntary sector.¹⁸²

By the mid-1980s many larger voluntary bodies were now expected to provide quasi-statutory provision funded by the state and on its behalf.¹⁸³ This put great strain on the voluntary sector. Assumptions were made about what could be delivered by voluntary agencies. In the 1990s New Labour wanted the resources to be seen in wider terms than simply money, but with little understanding of the limits in numbers of volunteers who were increasingly expected to deliver a professional service.¹⁸⁴

Christianity

Almost all charitable work associated with the settlements and missions was originally couched in Christian terms. As the century progressed, this Christian identity was to change and develop.¹⁸⁵ Some like Mansfield House wanted to foster in members a Christian character; others like the Mayflower were content with nothing less than conversion. As it said in a 1978 paper:

We are an Evangelical church and we do not disguise that the intention behind most of our contact with the young, adults and elderly, is to bring about a lasting relationship with the Lord.¹⁸⁶

Mayflower was committed to its evangelistic work but even here it was not always to convert people to the Church. Christ was the central figure in conversion, not an

¹⁸² London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report, 1986, p. 1.

¹⁸³ Brenton, 'The Voluntary Sector in British Social Services', p. 70.

¹⁸⁴ Blackmore, *The Voluntary Sector in a Changing Welfare State*, p. 28.

¹⁸⁵ M. Constance and H. King, "Two Nations" *The Life and Work of Liverpool University Settlement and its Associated Institutions. 1906-1937* (London: University Press of Liverpool Hodder and Stoughton, 1938), p. 6, Bentley Beaman, *Women and the Settlement Movement*, p. xxv.

¹⁸⁶ London, SLSA, *News from the Mayflower*, April 1978, p. 2.

institution.¹⁸⁷ There was also a sense that Mayflower was willing, at least in theory, to be converted by local people to their way of being Christian.¹⁸⁸

The NCRP was born out of Christian concerns for their community and initially saw faith and evangelism as key to its motivation.¹⁸⁹ It described its work as ‘seeking to combine an evangelistic concern for the individual with a deep concern for social justice.’¹⁹⁰

These institutions were happy to use external tools such as the Billy Graham rallies. Both Durning Hall and Mayflower organized trips to see him.¹⁹¹ But this was not always without comment. Tellingly it was the overtly Evangelical Mayflower Centre that could be critical of such projects. It felt these missions rarely kept people engaged.¹⁹² The most up-to-date translations of the Bible were employed at Mayflower for the children’s church.¹⁹³ McLeod in ‘Thews and Sinews’: Nonconformity and Sport, in Bebbington and Larsen’s *Modern Christianity and Cultural Aspirations* (2003), has noted the usefulness that Christian sporting heroes had in evangelism.¹⁹⁴ The Mayflower had a prominent example of this in Sheppard as captain of the England cricket team.

Despite their best efforts settlements and missions found East Enders resistant to organized religion. The Mayflower’s assessment was that Canning Town people respected the clergy but saw them as an irrelevance to their lives.¹⁹⁵ Even regular members of congregations, Sheppard remembers, stopped attending a church once they moved away.¹⁹⁶ Kennedy Cox found religion got in the way of the work of the club. Boys were unable or unwilling to read Bibles whose meaning was so obscure.¹⁹⁷ Even in

¹⁸⁷ Burton, *People Matter More Than Things*, p. 26.

¹⁸⁸ London, Marchant, *The Log of the Mayflower*. Spring, 1962.

¹⁸⁹ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report November 1972. p. 2.

¹⁹⁰ London, Marchant, *The Renewal Programme*. 1977.

¹⁹¹ London, SLSA, Minutes of Durning Hall Committee, 19 March, 1954.

¹⁹² London, Marchant, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Summer, 1961.

¹⁹³ London, Marchant, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Winter, 1961.

¹⁹⁴ Hugh McLeod, ‘Thews and Sinews’ Nonconformity and Sport’, in *Modern Christianity and Cultural Aspirations*, ed. by David Bebbington, and T. Larsen (London: Sheffield Academic Press, A Continuum Imprint, 2003), pp. 28-46, p. 42.

¹⁹⁵ London, SLSA, *News from the Mayflower*, April 1978, p. 2.

¹⁹⁶ Sheppard, *Built as a City*, p. 120.

¹⁹⁷ Kennedy Cox, *An Autobiography*, p. 104.

the 1950s attendance at the boy's Bible study group was small.¹⁹⁸ Quite early on Mansfield believed its principal aim was character building amongst the boys and men of West Ham irrespective of religious allegiance.¹⁹⁹ This was seen as a type of evangelism and McLeod has pointed out the close association the Victorians and Edwardians made with healthy bodies and a healthy spiritual life.²⁰⁰

Buildings themselves were also mission tools. Many of the settlements and missions had chapels like Durning Hall, Mansfield House, and the Mayflower that offered three services on a Sunday.²⁰¹ The attendance figures of churches and chapels attached to these institutions rarely matched attendance figures in the community centres. There were only a handful of people at the main service on the first day Durning Hall opened. Sunday schools remained popular, at least in the 1950s with 50 children attending Durning Hall's.²⁰² The Mayflower also had more success with children's services with seventy attending an 11.00 am service in the late 1950s.²⁰³ At St John's, North Woolwich, a thousand people attended the centre each week and yet they had at times more people attend midweek services than Sunday morning. Confirmations at St John's still remained popular in the 1960s with 50 candidates in 1968.²⁰⁴ Even the overtly evangelistic Mayflower was cautious about its growth and recognized few local people attended Sunday worship in the early days of the centre.²⁰⁵

More significantly, there grew up a sense that these community activities were evangelistic in themselves:

We believe that we are showing how the Church (given the building and equipment), can make a real and essential contribution to the life of people in

¹⁹⁸ London, SLISA, CTWS News and Annual Report 1954, p. 9.

¹⁹⁹ Anon, *Mansfield House Settlement*, 1932, p. 15.

²⁰⁰ London, Marchant, *News from the Mayflower*, April 1978, p. 45. See also Hugh McLeod, 'Thews and Sinews' Nonconformity and Sport', p. 45.

²⁰¹ London, SLISA, Minutes of Durning Hall Committee, 8 October, 1953.

²⁰² London, SLISA, Minutes of Durning Hall Committee, 3 November, 1955.

²⁰³ London, Marchant, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Winter, 1958.

²⁰⁴ *Essex Churchman*, October, 1969.

²⁰⁵ London, Marchant, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Winter, 1958.

community in our day. The Christian Gospel is being proclaimed in modern terms and those who are working for Christ in our parish have the joy of seeing people responding to the message of love and service.²⁰⁶

Simply saying morning and evening prayer was a form of witness.²⁰⁷ St John's Centre had at its heart a place of worship which was designed to meet changing liturgical needs. As the *Church Times* said, 'The Church, which has a square stone altar, is planned on contemporary liturgical lines.'²⁰⁸ These theological approaches were to strongly influence the attitudes of parochial clergy and church developments from the 1970s.

These institutions were pioneers of ecumenism. In the post-war era there was increasingly a spirit of collaboration with the Bishop of Barking and the President of the Free Church Council invited to Durning Hall's grand opening.²⁰⁹ In the 1970s it was NCRP that enabled Black-led churches to find a voice and a home in the borough.²¹⁰ NCRP was instrumental in bringing churches together to work on projects as they did with Methodists and URC in acquiring a church in Harold Road.²¹¹ By the 1980s the Felstead School Mission had a Baptist minister on the staff.²¹² A significant role NCRP offered was support for local churches. One early venture was a forum for a discussion groups for local clergy to reflect on the nature of the inner-city.²¹³

The wider church was going through a painful transition period as it sought ways of being relevant and meaningful to this new age.²¹⁴ There were a series of books published in the 1960s that were to influence a generation of ministers: Robinson's *On Being the Church in the World* (1960), Cox's *The Secular City* (1965), and Paul's *The Death and*

²⁰⁶ *Essex Churchman*, October 1969.

²⁰⁷ Well, *Community Led Regeneration and the Local Church*, p. 24.

²⁰⁸ *Church Times*, 1 November 1968, p. 1.

²⁰⁹ London, SLSA, Minutes of Durning Hall Committee, 11 November, 1953.

²¹⁰ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report November 1975, p. 19.

²¹¹ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report November 1975, p. 16.

²¹² Essex, The Felstead School Mission Annual Report. 1985, p. 10.

²¹³ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report November 1972, p. 12.

²¹⁴ Grace Davie, 'Religion in Post-war Britain', in *Understanding Post-War British Society*, ed. by James Obelkevich and Peter Cattrell (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 165-178, p. 167f.

Resurrection of the Church (1968).²¹⁵ All attempted to move the concerns of the Church to more practical, human issues. Leslie Paul actually visited Newham's clergy in the late 1960s.²¹⁶ Later on, Sheppard's *Built as a City* (1974), was to do the same for the Evangelical wing of the Church. The publication of Davies' *The Secular Use of Church Buildings* (1968), was to give a theological and historical insight into how the Church might open its doors to the wider community. It is possible to trace the influence of these works in the attitudes of clergy such as Stephen Lowe and John Whitwell, in Newham from the mid-1970s. Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s articles were appearing in the *Stratford Express* and the *Newham Recorder* that indicated the local churches were looking for a change in direction.²¹⁷ It was early in 1970 that the NCRP was set up partly in response to the number of churches that had closed in the borough. It was hoped that this grass roots community based organization would stem that tide and rejuvenate the churches of Newham. Very soon it was claiming in its Annual Report (1973):

It is achieving in East London what traditional church work has been unable to do for many years by establishing solid links between Christians and every section of the community... The NCRP thus represents a genuine breakthrough in Christian involvement in modern urban society.²¹⁸

It was not the function of these organizations to produce systematic theology to justify their work, but there were hints that there was theological reflection underpinning their ministry that drew on 60s theology. A belief that God was concerned for human worth was a recurring theme. The Renewal Programme's Annual Report (1977), stated that Christ asserted the rights and dignity and worth of each individual and this is the Renewal

²¹⁵ J. A. T., Robinson, *On Being the Church in the World* (London: SCM Press, 1960), Harvey Cox, *The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective* (London: SCM Press, 1965), Leslie Paul, *The Death and Resurrection of the Church* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1968).

²¹⁶ *Newham Recorder*, 3 October 1968, p. 58.

²¹⁷ Eric James was quoted calling for purpose built churches that met the needs of a modern urban world rather than a village idyll. *Newham Recorder*, 7 November 1968, p. 58. An article about declining revenue and the need to reorganize the local churches. *Newham Recorder*, 5 September 1968, p. 50. The Vicar of St Matthews, West Ham called for the church to be more relevant in ordinary people's lives. *Newham Recorder*, 16 April 1970, p. 13.

²¹⁸ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report 1973. Directors Report.

Programme's aim also.²¹⁹ Terms like the 'Kingdom of God' were employed as a symbol of justice and community.²²⁰ Theology was not just applied to their work but to the wider community. For Peter Watherston the powerlessness of the people of Canning Town was echoed in the teachings of Ezekiel that spoke to a crushed people of Jerusalem.²²¹

There was for some a blurring of boundaries between the secular and sacred. R. A. Coogan said of the new St John's Centre: '...we refuse to accept a division between the sacred and the secular parts of the Church witness in the area.'²²² Colin Marchant rejoiced at the view of industry, church, home and law, from his window in Lawrence Hall: 'God is not tucked away in some obscure corner. He and His people are to be set in the midst of all the vigour of our society.'²²³ This incarnational theology was to shape the parochial system in Newham that forcefully counter-challenged an assumption of spiritual abandonment in the city. This was a bold assertion in the inner-city that could be seen to contrast with a muted theological response from suburban Christianity.

This led to the question of how these institutions expressed their Christian identity. Clergy like Jimmy Froud simply wore a dog collar to reinforce gently the Christian presences in Durning Hall.²²⁴ Another gauge of this identity was in the language they used to describe themselves. NCRP's reports of the 1970s were couched in evangelistic language. It said it was 'seeking to combine an evangelistic concern for the individual with a deep concern for social justice.'²²⁵ By 2000 this had changed; the chairman reported; 'Whilst the Renewal Programme is founded on faith, it is faith of the broadest kind. Ultimately it is faith in the value of human beings.'²²⁶ These institutions were responding to a changing climate where religious language and Christian language in particular were increasingly felt to be out of place. Yet they struggled to find an appropriate means of demonstrating their faith.

²¹⁹ London, Marchant, *The Renewal Programme*. 1977.

²²⁰ Well, *Community Led Regeneration and the Local Church*, p. 22.

²²¹ Watherston, *A Different Kind of Church*, p. 11.

²²² *Essex Churchman*, October 1969.

²²³ *Newham Recorder*, 14 May 1970, p. 58.

²²⁴ Ray Keen, *The Aston Story*, p. 49.

²²⁵ London, Marchant, *The Renewal Programme*, 1977.

²²⁶ London, NCRPA, *Renewal Programme Annual Report*. 2000-1. Introduction.

Sheppard believed that the Christian aims of many settlements had been lost over the decades.²²⁷ However, this would be to ignore the numerous Christians who were involved in the management of individual projects as well as a growing number of representatives from other faith communities. Thirty years on there were still donations to the Renewal Programme from over twenty different Christian groups many of whom were very local, faith leaders supported its work and an Anglican priest was at its head.²²⁸

The nature of their identity was to be an issue for these institutions over the next fifty years. Some like the Renewal Programme have presented a secular face to colleagues and funding agencies where their original evangelistic zeal now would feel uncomfortable. Others like Mayflower have been transformed from the Evangelical Anglicanism of Sheppard and Sainsbury now to an independent Pentecostal Church. This struggle for identity was one local churches were also increasingly facing.

What did these agencies do?

There were a number of distinct areas of work that most of these agencies engaged in. The fact that they were popular indicates a degree of success. What emerges from the research is a grass roots response to issues that could adapt to changing circumstances. This led to a continuing evolving understanding of their work. The richness and variety of their efforts was considerable and it is only possible to give a flavour of the activities run in these centres.

Early work still reflected pre-war concerns and needs. The Coloured Men's Institute was offering 'dry' canteens and catered for the seamen working in the Docks.²²⁹ The Mayflower was still providing coal for the residents of Canning Town in the winter of 1959.²³⁰

²²⁷ Sheppard, *Steps Along Hope Street*, p. 57.

²²⁸ London, NCRPA, Renewal Programme Annual Report. 2000-1. p. 17.

²²⁹ Kamal Churchie, *Twenty Five Years Among Coloured People in Docklands* (Privately Published, 1946), p. 6.

²³⁰ London, Marchant, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Winter 1959.

Within a year of opening the Trinity Centre, run by NCRP in the early 1970s, had lunch clubs, after schools clubs, youth work, social clubs, housing advice, elders groups, an alcoholic rehabilitation centre and music trust.²³¹ Mayflower took a fifty strong party of adults and children on holiday to Bracklesham Bay.²³²

Originally, Mansfield House's principal work was with boys and men and provided almost exclusively sporting facilities. There has been a long relationship between sports and Christian mission in urban areas.²³³ Not all have seen this as a positive thing. S. J. Hoffman in *Sport and Religion* (1992) was critical of the spiritual assumptions made about religion and sport.²³⁴ Hugh McLeod has investigated the role of sporting activities amongst the Free churches. This was linked with alternative recreation to the pub and a healthy outlet for the energies of working class men and boys.²³⁵ This link with sport and religion was to have a brief revival amongst some churches in Newham during the 2012 Olympics, set in Newham.

Mayflower's youth work was with young people whose behaviour was too challenging for mainstream youth clubs.²³⁶ Centres developed their work to match changing needs. Mayflower did not have much use for the old gymnasium in the 1950s and 60s and converted it to a venue for dancing, which was popular.²³⁷ Mayflower alongside NCRP and Aston were providing job creation schemes as unemployment rose in the late 1970s and 1980s.²³⁸

These Christian community centres were often pioneers in work amongst new communities in Newham. NCRP was one of the first organizations to recognize the need

²³¹ London, Marchant, The Trinity Centre Information Flyer, c 1970s.

²³² London, Marchant, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Winter, 1958.

²³³ 1 Corinthians 9: 24-27.

²³⁴ S. J. Hoffman, *Sport and Religion* (Illinois: Human Kinetic Books, 1992), p. 89.

²³⁵ Hugh McLeod, 'Thews and Sinews' Nonconformity and Sport', p. 33, and p. 35.

²³⁶ London, Marchant, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Winter, 1966.

²³⁷ Watherston, *A Different Kind of Church*, p. 31.

²³⁸ London, SLSA, *News from the Mayflower*, April 1978, p. 1.

for community space by the Caribbean community moving into the borough.²³⁹ They responded to the Ugandan Asian crisis that was to affect Newham before the council did.²⁴⁰ Thanks to a government grant they appointed a case worker to support this new community.²⁴¹ There were translation services offered in the growing number of languages spoken in the borough.²⁴²

Many strove for inclusion. Durning Hall started one of the first community relations councils.²⁴³ It was proud that Sikhs, Hindus, Catholics and Anglicans all worked under its roof.²⁴⁴ With the growing issue of multiculturalism in the borough organizations alike NCRP began boys and girls clubs to support Asian youths who faced a hostile reception from existing agencies.²⁴⁵ They began language classes for Asians and home language classes for the hard to contact groups within the Asian Community.²⁴⁶ NCRP supported the Newham Carers Network working with families of those who face long term illness and disability.²⁴⁷ Some worked as umbrella agencies offering space for groups such as Age Concern. Many of the buildings were state of the art in their day; Mayflower had lavish provision for its youth work in 1957.²⁴⁸

One criticism of all this work was that it centred activity not in the community but in a building; as one history of a settlement said, 'Everything went on at the Round House.'²⁴⁹ Even David Sheppard, in *Built as a City* (1974), argued that the Church should be out in the community forming partnerships with secular agencies.²⁵⁰ Activities were not just restricted to the centres themselves. Mayflower's work with the elderly included home visiting teams.²⁵¹ By the mid-1980s Mansfield House was running a support group for

²³⁹ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report 1979, p. 12.

²⁴⁰ *Newham Recorder*, 15 March 1973, p. 64.

²⁴¹ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report November 1973.

²⁴² London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report November 1972. p. 10.

²⁴³ Howard, *Our Durning Hall*, p. 11.

²⁴⁴ Howard, *Our Durning Hall*, p. 11.

²⁴⁵ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report November 1973.

²⁴⁶ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report November 1972. p. 13.

²⁴⁷ London, NCRPA, *A Challenging Journey*, 2005/6, p. 4.

²⁴⁸ London, SLSA, *Docklands Report*, 1957, p. 4.

²⁴⁹ Rose and Woods, *Everything Went on at the Round House*.

²⁵⁰ Sheppard, *Built as a City*, p. 262.

²⁵¹ London, Marchant, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Winter, 1959.

cancer patients.²⁵² Aston developed a research centre that through the leadership of Greg Smith, produced reports, directories and academic articles on East London to raise awareness of Newham's issues. On a more personal note youth workers at the Mayflower in the 1970s were writing to past club members who were in prison.²⁵³

From the 1970s traditional approaches were being modified and centres also began to develop self-help groups that aimed to empower local people.²⁵⁴ The residents of Mayflower in the mid-1960s were no longer expected to 'run' things in quite the old way and were now required to fit into the life of the centre administered increasingly by the locals.²⁵⁵ NCRP involved school children, students from the Polytechnic and members of a youth clubs to organize play groups and provide a lunch club.²⁵⁶ A project that has its origins in NCRP's work from the 1970s supported homeless young people to find employment and a place to live.²⁵⁷

One measure of their effectiveness was their popularity. Shortly after the Mayflower opened in 1958 they were catering for between 200 and 300 children, slightly more boys than girls, and with a waiting list.²⁵⁸ Mayflower had sixty children attending a nursery each day in the early 1960s.²⁵⁹ Older, more established centres, like Mansfield House had 1,200 members before the war.²⁶⁰ By 1959 it was boasting an attendance of 80,000 a year.²⁶¹ St John's, North Woolwich, was so in demand that they had a membership of 800 with activities as wide ranging as gymnastics to dress making. As the vicar said '...there is a real family involvement in our centre...' ²⁶² Not all were successful and the warden of Durning Hall reported that some activities were slow at taking off.²⁶³

²⁵² London, SLSA, Mansfield House University Settlement Annual Report, 1984, p. 18.

²⁵³ London, SLSA, *News from the Mayflower*, April 1978, p. 2.

²⁵⁴ London, SLSA, Mansfield House University Settlement Annual Report, 1984, p. 18, Barrett, *Blackfriars Settlement a Short History 1887-1987*, p. 58.

²⁵⁵ London, Marchant, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Spring, 1964.

²⁵⁶ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report November 1972. p. 15.

²⁵⁷ London, NCRPA, *A Challenging Journey*, 2005/6, p. 8.

²⁵⁸ London, Marchant, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Spring, 1958.

²⁵⁹ London, Marchant, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Summer, 1963.

²⁶⁰ Anon, *Mansfield House Settlement, 1932*, p. 12.

²⁶¹ London SLSA, *The Next Step*, c1959.

²⁶² *Essex Churchman*, October 1969.

²⁶³ London, SLSA, Minutes of Durning Hall Committee, 4 April, 1957.

One area of significant change was the growing professional identity of these bodies. Originally, there were no career paths for employees of settlements and missions. The early pioneers were often no more than gifted amateurs. It is interesting to note how quickly professional experience was valued and required. Kennedy Cox came to the Docklands Settlement with no experience of community work.²⁶⁴ Yet he was calling for professionally trained workers for settlements as early as 1931.²⁶⁵ Specific training and expertise were still not required by the Mayflower in the 1950s. George Burton and Jean Lodge brought no direct experience of youth work with them but much experience of challenging situations.²⁶⁶

However, as the century wore on a more professional approach was expected. Projects were not just established on a whim but now there is strong evidence that these ventures had considerable gestation periods. It took six years for St John's to be built.²⁶⁷ As reputations grew these agencies were invited on to other bodies. NCRP were very quickly requested to work as community consultant on new developments such as the plans for a 'New Beckon'.²⁶⁸ *The Patey Report* (1976), saw a growing recognition that training and community work skills alongside theological underpinning were needed to support church based community work.²⁶⁹ As traditional models of ministry faltered clergy were drawn to community work but there was little serious training and much work was dependent on individual personalities.²⁷⁰

Roger Sainsbury came to the Mayflower with some experience. He was curate in Spitalfields before working as the Missioner to Shrewsbury House, Everton.²⁷¹ It was here that he witnessed the effects of the closure of the Liverpool Docks and came to Canning Town as warden at the point East London's docks were in decline.

²⁶⁴ Kennedy Cox, *An Autobiography*, p. 83.

²⁶⁵ Kennedy Cox, *An Autobiography*, p. 311.

²⁶⁶ Burton, *People Matter More Than Things*, p. 21.

²⁶⁷ *Essex Churchman*, October 1969.

²⁶⁸ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report 1979. p. 8.

²⁶⁹ Patey, *Community Work and the Churches*, p. 9.

²⁷⁰ Patey, *Community Work and the Churches*, p. 8.

²⁷¹ Sainsbury, *Justice on the Agenda*, p. 8.

One means of estimating growing professionalism was the increase in paid staff. In the early days the warden of St John's was the parish priest and the only other paid members of staff were the caretaker and cleaner to keep costs to a minimum.²⁷² By the late 1970s they had employed a warden to manage the centre. In the early 1970s NCRP was employing ten committed Christians on the team.²⁷³ By 1973 there were two full time staff, three community service volunteers, a Church Army Officer on placement and student working with the Asian Community.²⁷⁴ A cautionary note was raised by Sheppard in the *Mayflower Log* for autumn 1961. He recognized the significant contribution to youth work volunteers made and was concerned that the stress on a professional staff would drive gifted local people out.²⁷⁵

Connections

These agencies did not exist in isolation. There was a complex web of relationships and mutual support that existed amongst and between many of these bodies. Connections were formed as early as 1911 with staff from Mansfield employed at the Manchester Settlement.²⁷⁶ As has been noted Roger Sainsbury was the Shrewsbury House Missioner before coming to Mayflower. Colin Marchant was a Baptist minister at the West Ham Central Mission before taking over as Warden of Lawrence Hall from Jimmy Froud.²⁷⁷ He was to eventually become head of Aston Charities. There were close personal friendships formed as in the case of David Sheppard and Colin Marchant.²⁷⁸ In the 1990s NCRP had the head of Aston's Froud Centre on its board of directors as well as the Rector of St Bartholomew's, East Ham.²⁷⁹ Shortly after the war Mansfield House employed the local Anglican Priest of St Andrew's as chaplain and this relationship continued until the mid-1980s.²⁸⁰

²⁷² *Essex Churchman*, October 1969.

²⁷³ London, Marchant, *Introducing the Renewal Programme*, p. 3.

²⁷⁴ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report November 1973.

²⁷⁵ London, Marchant, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Autumn, 1961.

²⁷⁶ Rose and Woods, *Everything Went on at the Round House*, p. 61.

²⁷⁷ Ray Keen, *The Aston Story*, p. 55.

²⁷⁸ Sheppard, *Built as a City*, p. 80.

²⁷⁹ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report November 1991-92, p. 22.

²⁸⁰ London, SLISA, Minute Book of Mansfield House Settlement 12 November, 1946.

There were other connections as in the case of Aston and the CTWS. The CTWS finally amalgamated with Aston Charities in the face of financial problems in 1966.²⁸¹ Aston's second community building Lawrence Hall was built on the site of the old CTWS.²⁸² By the late 1970s the Newham churches' Docklands Group was co-chaired by Colin Marchant, now working at Lawrence Hall and Paul Regan working for NCRP, alongside Stephen Lowe as secretary, the Rector of East Ham.²⁸³ Colin Marchant was to retire as head of Aston Charities and Paul Regan was to become head of NCRP. Eventually Aston and Mansfield were to amalgamate to form the Aston Mansfield Charities. Their influence was to be seen in the development of St Bartholomew's, East Ham and St Mark's, Beckton, under Stephen Lowe and St Michael's, Manor Park. It is these developments that will be looked at in more detail in chapters Three and Four.

The local churches were fundamental to the support of projects in their early days. They provided a base for activities in their own buildings until NCRP could obtain premises of their own.²⁸⁴ St Bartholomew's Church, East Ham, was hosting fundraising events for NCRP in the mid-1980s.²⁸⁵ NCRP was to encourage and support these partnerships between local churches.²⁸⁶ By 1973 there were fourteen Anglican churches, two Roman Catholic and sixteen other churches supporting NCRP.²⁸⁷

Mayflower had connections with Oundle School, a College in Ramsgate as well as a parish in Buckhurst Hill, Essex.²⁸⁸ There were also connections with statutory agencies. NCRP was working with early government employment projects like Capital Jobmate.²⁸⁹ Members of NCRP were invited to sit on local and national organizations.²⁹⁰ St John's, North Woolwich, a church and community centre, was a partnership between Newham

²⁸¹ London, SLAS, CTWS News and Annual Report 1966.

²⁸² Ray Keen, *The Aston Story*, p. 55.

²⁸³ London, SLAS, *News from the Mayflower*, April 1978, p. 4.

²⁸⁴ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report 1979, p. 16.

²⁸⁵ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report. 1986, p. 5.

²⁸⁶ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report November 1972, p. 9.

²⁸⁷ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report November 1973.

²⁸⁸ London, Marchant, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Summer, 1961.

²⁸⁹ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report 1979, p. 17.

²⁹⁰ NCRP Annual Report November 1972, p. 9f.

Council and the business sector of the parish.²⁹¹ The Felstead School Mission was seen as a strategic base for LDDC.²⁹² There were connections made with agencies from around the world. NCRP had links with the Jim Wallis and the Sojourners Community in Washington, a Christian peace and justice group.²⁹³

Conclusion

These early community projects in Newham successfully negotiated the challenges of a post-war era and carved out a valuable role in providing social care to the people of Newham. They indicated the social change in the personnel that worked in these institutions and a change in attitude to poverty and the poor. They were to face the effects of political intrusion from the 1980s as successive governments sought to renegotiate the welfare state using the voluntary sector as a potential collaborator. They were, like the churches, confronted with a changing world from the 1960s that required them to discover new roles and new meaning in a borough that was a crucible of change. Their work continued to be pioneering not least in its attempt to draw in local people to manage and deliver local projects. They became places where the new theologies of the 1960s were tested and which contributed to a theological underpinning to much of the future work of local churches from the 1980s. Their leadership formed a network of interested parties that shared personnel, resources and insights that spread beyond the institutions themselves to influence the work and objectives of the wider church. It would not be too strong to suggest a direct connection between these early community ventures and the adaptation of churches in Newham in the later quarter of the century. They formed a significant, indirect influence on those churches that redeveloped and were a clear example of how institutions that had felt obsolete could create a genuine role in the Newham of the late twentieth-century.

²⁹¹ *Essex Churchman*, October 1969.

²⁹² Essex, The Felstead School Mission Annual Report, 1985, p. 2.

²⁹³ London, NCRPA, NCRP Annual Report. 1986, p. 2.

Chapter Three:

St Bartholomew's development

Introduction

This chapter will examine the first of the Church redevelopments that took place in Newham, and perhaps the most significant, given its timing and influence, that of St Bartholomew's, East Ham (Map 3.1).



Map 3.1 The boundaries of the parish of the East Ham Team Ministry.

Source: Chelmsford Diocesan Office.

East Ham parish is bounded on the north by the parish of St Paul's East Ham and the east by the Deanery Redbridge. Their near neighbour to the south is the parish of St Mark's, Beckton and to the west by the parish of St George's, East Ham.

This church was transformed from a large, empty Edwardian building, dark and foreboding, into a modern, purpose-built community centre and church open seven days a week. The social necessities of the area attracted both money and entrepreneurial skill. As was outlined in the previous chapter, settlements, community centres and church halls developed, catering for an extensive variety of communal and recreational needs amongst

the urban poor. These ventures were harbingers of what was to be a significant social experiment conducted by the Church of England. Drawing on the experience and skill of past pioneers and faced with new realities of urban deprivation, multiculturalism and shifting patterns of church adherence an innovative form of church and community centre was developed. The model for this approach was the St Bartholomew's scheme in East Ham. In many ways this was the most complex, thorough and imaginative of all the redevelopments in Newham. This project became an exemplar for others in how it interacted with institutions and individuals. It influenced new buildings at St Mark's, Forest Gate, St Michael's, Manor Park, and St Mark's, Beckton. Examining the St Bartholomew's redevelopment, a story emerges of how the Church of England in Newham developed its role and renewed itself from the 1970s.

Its origins

Setting the scene, the early history of East Ham was one of a rural community living on the edge of the industrialized West Ham. A relatively static population initially meant that church growth was slow in the area with little heavy industry. Before the 1860s East Ham's Anglican community had been served by one Norman parish church. Its population was estimated at 2,264 in 1863.¹ In 1866 St John's Church was built to meet the needs of a growing district at the north end of the parish.² This was a community developing around the railway station at East Ham some distance from the old parish church.³ Even up to 1888 East Ham, in contrast to her neighbour in the west, was relatively free of industrialization. It was described by a local historian Pagenstecher as a 'long and straggling village, extending from Wanstead Flats to the Thames at North Woolwich.'⁴ It was the rapid growth of population in the closing decade of the century that was to require a new Anglican church for East Ham. By 1901 the inhabitants of the

¹ William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of the County of Essex* (Sheffield: Leader and Sons, 1863), p. 638.

² Gustav Pagenstecher, *History of the Parish of East and West Ham* (Stratford Essex: Wilson and Whitworth, 1908), p. 219. St John's was demolished shortly after St Bartholomew's was first built.

³ Alfred Stokes, *History of East Ham, from Village to County Borough* (Wilson and Whitworth, 1933), p. 273.

⁴ Pagenstecher, *History of the Parish of East and West Ham*, p. 255.

parish had reached 96,018 and were estimated to have grown to 140,000 by 1908.⁵ It was only when the parish of East Ham threatened to become the largest in England that a plan to develop a more substantial place of worship was initiated by the Revd J. H. Ware.⁶ St Bartholomew's church was completed in 1903, '...at a time [said a *Parish Information* sheet from 1982] when the promise of church growth was such that the building of a large 1,200 seater church seemed more than justified.'⁷ Even at its completion it was to remain a chapel of ease to the medieval parish church of St Mary Magdalene (Fig 3.1).⁸



Figure 3.1 St Mary's, East Ham.

The author's collection.

By 1908 it was calculated that twenty-nine Anglican clergy were working in East Ham in eight churches.⁹

⁵ Kelly's, *Ilford, Manor Park and East Ham Directory* (London: Kelly's Directory, 1908), p. 22 .

⁶ Stokes, *History of East Ham, from Village to County Borough*, p. 272. It was Ware's untimely death at the age of 43 that led to St Bartholomew's becoming known locally as the Ware Memorial Church. Stokes, *History of East Ham, from Village to County Borough*, p. 274f.

⁷ London, SBCA, Information Sheet, 28 May 1982.

⁸ Stokes, *History of East Ham, from Village to County Borough*, p. 273.

⁹ Pagenstecher, *History of the Parish of East and West Ham*, p. 219.

St Bartholomew's served well the population of the district throughout the First World War and into the inter-war period. By the 1920s there were twenty-eight ecclesiastical parishes and mission districts with some fifty full time clergy and a similar number of lay workers in the borough.¹⁰ With the advent of the Second World War, East Ham, as part of the East End, was a significant target in air-raids. In April 1940 at the height of the Blitz an incendiary bomb severely damaged the old church.¹¹ Although the building was gutted, a temporary hall was built in the ruins and was used until a refurbished church was opened in the early 1950s. It was these following decades that were to see the most significant change to parish life in East Ham.

The crisis

Callum Brown's contention was that the decades after the 1960s were the point of crisis for the churches in Britain.¹² Examining the evidence from Newham that emergency began to manifest itself in the early 1970s. On every traditional indicator of health the Anglican churches in Newham were facing difficulties. There was a sense the Church was reaching a turning point.¹³ The *Newham Recorder* became a regular commentator on this crisis raising the concerns of local clergy in its columns. The warden of the Mayflower Centre predicted the Church of England in Newham must change or die if it was to meet the challenges of the future.¹⁴ This was in the light of a report to the Deanery Synod recommending the demolition of many smaller churches.¹⁵

Numerically, the Church of England was facing dramatic decline. Between 1975 and 1985 the combined electoral roll figures for the deanery dropped by over 500.¹⁶ The evidence for regression in East Ham was even more dramatic with communion figures

¹⁰ Martin Purdy, 'The Urban Experience. A Study of Church Building within the Industrial Metropolis' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Birmingham, 1984), p. 347.

¹¹ *Newham Recorder*, 3 July 1980, p. 43.

¹² Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding secularisation 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 1.

¹³ Trevor Beeson, *The Church of England in Crisis* (London: Davis-Poynter Press, 1973), p. 40.

¹⁴ *Newham Recorder*, 23 November 1972, p. 58.

¹⁵ *Newham Recorder*, 27 April 1972, p. 58.

¹⁶ See Table 5.1 on page 224.

halved in the ten years after 1965.¹⁷ So significant was this waning that for some Canning Town epitomised the decline in church life nationally.¹⁸

The morale of the clergy was clearly affected, as in the case of the Vicar of St Matthew's, West Ham. He dramatically announced his resignation citing the growing paganism he encountered in the parish.¹⁹ These anxieties were exacerbated further by the increasing financial distress of clergy families as highlighted by the wife of the Rector of East Ham in 1974.²⁰ Laity were urged not to be depressed by the present and remain a welcoming presence in their communities.²¹ The Vicar of the Ascension, Victoria Dock, predicted an uncertain future for the congregation in 1975 as the parish faced upheaval and change.²² He did not go so far as his colleague at St Paul's, East Ham, who felt that the beginning of 1974 portended 'clear indication' of the end of the world.²³

The Church of England had to manage buildings that were becoming obsolete. As congregational numbers dwindled churches were to become burdensome testaments to decline.²⁴ It was part of a national trend. Adrian Hastings estimates that the Church of England closed 1,086 churches between 1969 and 1984.²⁵ It was assessed that a quarter of these were demolished.²⁶ Superficially, Newham seemed to avoid this fate and this was almost certainly due to the winnowing effects of the Blitz. The borough lost landmarks such as St Peter's, Upton Cross and the original church for North Woolwich. Only three churches were made redundant in the twenty years from 1970. These were St Luke's, Canning Town, St Andrew's, Plaistow and St Cedd's, Plaistow. In reality, almost

¹⁷ London, SBCA, Martin Purdy, 'Parish of East Ham with St Alban's Upton Park. Research Report' 75/2/WH. October 1975. p. 50.

¹⁸ Davie notes the failure of religious life in Canning Town and the need for a fresh approach. Grace Davie, 'Religion in Post-war Britain', in *Understanding Post-War British Society*, ed. by James Obelkevich and Peter Cattrell (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 165-178, p. 168.

¹⁹ *Newham Recorder*, 20 January 1972, p. 1.

²⁰ *Newham Recorder*, 7 February 1974, p. 3.

²¹ *Newham Recorder*, 10 February 1972, p. 10.

²² *Newham Recorder*, 16 January 1975, p. 58.

²³ *Newham Recorder*, 17 January 1974, p. 6.

²⁴ Richard Giles, *Re-pitching the Tent: The Definitive Guide to Reordering your Church* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2004), p. 59.

²⁵ Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity 1920-1990* (London: Collins Fount Paperbacks, 1987), p. 602.

²⁶ Ken Powell and Celia De La Hay, *Churches a Question of Conversion* (London: Save Britain's Heritage, 1987), p. 16.

every parish church in Newham had a mission hall or chapel attached to it. It was these that were to be sacrificed in a bid by the parishes to survive. Churches like St Michael's, Manor Park, had the St John's Hall and the Little Eye Club, both sold to Pentecostal churches. In 1967 the old neighbouring parish of St Alban's was amalgamated into that of St Bartholomew's, East Ham.²⁷ It was Newham's church buildings that were to be the focus of anxiety about the future.

The large Victorian and Edwardian churches were too big for dwindling congregations in the inner-city.²⁸ Peter Rudge stated, 'What were once intended as witnesses to the majesty of the eternal God can become monuments to the irrelevance of His Church.'²⁹ Historians such as Peter Stapels highlighted the problem of buildings that had outlived their usefulness and were a significant drain on church resources.³⁰ By the 1970s managing such a large building as St Bartholomew's was found to be '...burdensome and irrelevant...' as a parish information sheet said in 1982.³¹ The angst of the Church centred on its buildings as symbols of decay.³²

Lack of money was to be a considerable issue. The future direction of the Church of England was being shaped by such concerns.³³ Writers like Leslie Paul felt this economic crisis was as much to blame for the problem of church buildings as numerical decline.³⁴ An article quoted in the *Newham Recorder* stated St Barnabas', Manor Park, was facing a routine of asking for money in the light of a growing deficit.³⁵ By the 1960s East Ham, alongside many urban churches, was facing a dilemma in fundraising to cover the increasing costs of maintaining such large buildings. St Bartholomew's was described by

²⁷ London, SBCA, Martin Purdy, 'Parish of East Ham with St Alban's Upton Park. Research Report' 75/2/WH. October 1975. p. 8. St Alban's Upton Park, about half a mile from St Bartholomew's.

²⁸ S. J. D. Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline: Organisation and experience in industrial Yorkshire, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 386.

²⁹ Peter F. Rudge, *Ministry and Management: The Study of Ecclesiastical Administration* (London: Taverstock Publications, 1968), p. 159.

³⁰ Peter Stapels, *The Church of England 1961-1980* (Leiden: Interuniversitair voor Missiologie en Oecumenica, 1981), p. 49.

³¹ London, SBCA, Information Sheet, 28 May 1982.

³² Robin Gill, *The Myth of the Empty Church* (London: SPCK, 1993), p. 77.

³³ Stapels, *The Church of England 1961-1980*, p. 49.

³⁴ Leslie Paul, *A Church by Daylight. A Reappraisal of the Church of England and its Future* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1973), p. 181.

³⁵ *Newham Recorder*, 20 January 1972, p. 54.

the then churchwarden, Linda Steward, as ‘...a very big old barn of a building... with dwindling congregation.’³⁶ In November 1967 the lowest quote for repair work on the building recommended by the quinquennial was £3,657. Some indication of the task in hand was given when later it was stated in the same Parochial Church Council (PCC), minutes that the parish raised no more than £270 from the annual bazaar that year.³⁷ By the early 1970s the building needed an estimated £10,000 spent on redecorating and refurbishment with only £2,000 in church funds. The diocese had already given £1,000 to the church for rewiring with little chance of further grants. The financial problem was to increase with time, in part as a result of the rising inflation that was sweeping the nation.³⁸

There was a sense that the old St Bartholomew’s church had been built to the glory of God but was now a deterrent to the Christian gospel. In the opinion of one article in a *Parish Information Sheet*, the old building was irrelevant to the people of Newham and retaining it was nothing short of slow suicide and the abdication of responsibility.³⁹ Like many churches in urban areas St Bartholomew’s had to remain locked due to the threat of vandalism.⁴⁰ It was an underused resource and could only be open for six hours a week. Doris Goodchild, a member of the congregation in the 1970s, recalls the problems of petty crime.⁴¹ Indeed, throughout the 1970s vandalism of churches and theft were to regularly feature in the pages of the *Newham Recorder* to add to the general malaise infecting the borough.⁴² The East Ham Team was seen as one of the most problematic parishes in the diocese.

³⁶ Interview, Steward, 8 March 2010.

³⁷ London, SBCA, Minutes of East Ham PCC, 27 November 1967.

³⁸ Howard Glennerster, *British Social Policy Since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 156.

³⁹ London, SBCA, Information Sheet, 28 May 1982.

⁴⁰ London, SBCA, Information Sheet, 28 May 1982.

⁴¹ Interview, Goodchild, 11 March 2010.

⁴² *Newham Recorder*, 8 February 1973, p. 56, there was an article about the fear of crime preventing members of a congregation attending church services. *Newham Recorder*, 7 February 1974, p. 10 featured the theft of paintings from a church. *Newham Recorder*, 18 December 1975, p. 7, gravestones were destroyed in the graveyard at East Ham. *Newham Recorder*, 12 October 1978, p. 8 in the most serious incident a chapel in the Cyprus area of Docklands was gutted after an arson attack.

There was every indication that the Church was now in a terminal state. It would be reasonable to suppose that the Diocese of Chelmsford would cut its losses and like other denominations withdraw from the inner-city leaving only a token presence. Yet this did not happen. Despite the problems there was very clear evidence of a willingness to remain in post. Indeed the next decade was to see the Church of England tackle the most pressing of its problems the church-plant.

Responding to the crisis, changing role

Evidence that the Church was not cowed by these problems was the energy and enthusiasm of church leaders, the partnerships they could develop and the resource they could draw on in and outside the borough. The inner city drew in some of the most talented and creative clergy in the Church of the time. Rather than putting people off, it seemed to inspire them. A recurring feature of these projects was the personalities and skills of key figures in their gestation. These include clergy like Stephen Lowe, the architect Martin Purdy and the support of a wide body of laity. All this was indicative of a church that was willing to resist the popular notion of secularization and decline in the borough.

It was actually Reg Tozer, the then Rector of East Ham, who had the initial vision to create a new church, and provide housing for the deprived.⁴³ At a meeting on 30 October 1974 between the Archdeacon, Tozer and the churchwardens it was agreed that the diocese would give £1,000 towards a feasibility study. There were eight buildings on five separate sites in the East Ham Team by 1975.⁴⁴ There was a sense that there was a lack of coherent thinking about why the parish was involved in so many buildings and that the parish were, ‘...little more than landlords.’⁴⁵ Martin Purdy, a founder partner of the firm of Architects, Planners, and Ecclesiastical Consultants (APEC), from Birmingham was

⁴³ London, SBCA, Martin Purdy, ‘Parish of East Ham with St Alban’s Upton Park. Research Report’ 75/2/WH. October 1975. p. 12.

⁴⁴ London, SBCA, Martin Purdy, ‘Parish of East Ham with St Alban’s Upton Park. Research Report’. 75/2/WH. October 1975. p. 9 The Team comprised of St Bartholomew’s, St Alban’s and St Mary’s churches with their halls and Fellowship House a former Rectory used for community work.

⁴⁵ London, SBCA, Martin Purdy, ‘Parish of East Ham with St Alban’s Upton Park. Research Report’ 75/2/WH. October 1975. p. 12.

appointed to produce a report.⁴⁶ Tozer was to tend his resignation in 1974 affording a fresh approach to the parish's problems.

It was with the appointment of Stephen Lowe that East Ham began to seriously respond to the issue. Lowe recalls that it was after a conversation between John Trillo, the Bishop of Chelmsford, and his old college principal Anthony Dyson, that he was asked to look at the vacant parish.⁴⁷ Lowe remembered visiting the parish on the 27 December 1974 with memories of terrible halls at St Alban's, an overgrown churchyard at St Mary's and an enormous church in St Bartholomew's.⁴⁸ Although Lowe felt that all the churches needed attention it was St Bartholomew's that had the greatest urgency.⁴⁹ Lowe thought that the building was of little use for the task of mission in a modern urban context.⁵⁰ Talking about his early impressions of the old building, he said, 'It was clear to me at that stage that we couldn't go on like this.'⁵¹ Within two weeks of his Induction Lowe was discussing the possibility the church should be pulled down and redeveloped.⁵²

Stephen Lowe

Stephen Lowe was to represent a new breed of clergyperson drawn to the inner-city. This was a time when the very nature of priesthood was in question as earlier writings such as C. E. Osborne's *The Christian Priest of Today* (1934), C. R. Forder's *The Parish Priest at Work* (1947), were making way for more contemporary reflections on the nature of ministry. From Michael Ramsey's *The Christian Priest Today* (1972), Towler and Coxon's *The Fate of the Anglican Clergy: A Sociological Study* (1979), Anthony Russell's *The Clerical Profession* (1980), to works such as Wesley Carr's *The Priestlike Task* (1985), priestly role was being reassessed.⁵³ These titles were indicative of shifting

⁴⁶ London, SBCA, Martin Purdy, 'Parish of East Ham with St Alban's Upton Park. Research Report' 75/2/WH. October 1975. p. 1.

⁴⁷ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

⁴⁸ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

⁴⁹ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

⁵⁰ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

⁵¹ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

⁵² *Newham Recorder*, 17 July 1975, p. 42.

⁵³ C. E. Osborne, *The Christian Priest of Today* (London: Mowbray, 1934), C. R. Forder, *The Parish Priest at Work: An Introduction to Systematic Pastoralia* (London: SPCK, 1947), Michael Ramsey, *The Christian Priest Today* (London: SPCK, 1972), Robert Towler and A. P. M. Coxon, *The Fate of the Anglican Clergy:*

understandings of priesthood. Was it a profession like others or a more amorphous set of tasks undertaken by a gifted individual? The stress on 'Today' emphasised the need for a more up-to-date approach to ministry, Towler and Coxon's study hinted at the demise of something ancient and precious.

This was the milieu that Stephen Lowe ministered within. Very obviously, his style was to side with modernity. This resulted in a rejection of many of the old trappings of the priesthood.⁵⁴ He projected an image of a dynamic leader that crafted his role to respond to the challenge of the inner-city and gain status within the community. He was skilful at utilizing the media to support his work. Yet change was not without its price and Lowe experienced the stress such projects placed on clergy who were willing to be unpopular in their quest for change.

Lowe described himself as on the liberal, radical wing of the Church.⁵⁵ As Robin Greenwood suggests, many clergy of Lowe's generation valued individual clergy as role models rather than abstract ideas.⁵⁶ Lowe said his influences included John Robinson, Eric James and Ken Leech.⁵⁷ A local priest, Nigel Porter, no stranger to controversy, was also to encourage and influence Lowe when he first arrived in Newham.⁵⁸ Lowe had trained at Ripon Hall, Oxford under Anthony Dyson whose commitment to urban ministry and ecumenism seemed to have shaped Lowe's character.⁵⁹ He served his curacies in the Diocese of Birmingham, under Neville Chamberlain, at St Michael's, Gospel Lane, which was at the time a prefabricated hut. Through a member of the congregation Lowe came under the influence of J. G. Davies and Gilbert Cope and the

A Sociological Study (London: Macmillan Press, 1979), Anthony Russell, *The Clerical Profession* (London: SPCK, 1980), Wesley Carr, *The Priestlike Task* (London: SPCK, 1985).

⁵⁴ Robert Towler and A. P. M. Coxon, *The Fate of the Anglican Clergy: A Sociological Study* (London: Macmillan Press, 1979), p. 194.

⁵⁵ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

⁵⁶ Robin Greenwood, *Transforming Priesthood. A New Theology of Mission and Ministry* (London: SPCK, 1994), p. 7.

⁵⁷ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

⁵⁸ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

⁵⁹ Robert Jeffery, 'An Uneasy Alliance: From the Merger to the Present Day', in *Ambassadors of Christ* ed. by Mark D. Chapman (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 195-215, p. 200.

Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture.⁶⁰ After Gospel Lane he moved to Woodgate Valley with a commission from the Bishop of Birmingham to develop the site there and this was his experimental canvas prior to East Ham.⁶¹

Lowe was clearly a charismatic figure, in one interview he was described as brash and single-minded.⁶² The *Newham Recorder* described his impact; 'There's an air of excitement and exhilaration about Lowe. Just talking to him makes you feel good.'⁶³ Linda Steward said that, '...we got excited and burned with fire at what he was trying to do...'⁶⁴ There was also something of the showman about him when he led a donkey through the streets of East Ham on Palm Sunday 1980.⁶⁵ Lowe seemed to have relished the challenge of St Bartholomew's, saying, 'Clearly, there was an immense attraction in coming here because of the sense of hopelessness we found.'⁶⁶

Adair suggested this was an age that encouraged a more world-centred role for the priest and a rejection of what might hint at the cultic.⁶⁷ This sometimes focused on a rejection of the trappings of priesthood.⁶⁸ Lowe seemed uncomfortable with clerical garb and, as the *Newham Recorder* said, '...[he] does not conform with everyone's popular image of a priest. You are far more likely to find him wearing a blazer and tie than a dog collar and cassock.'⁶⁹ Significantly, this was an era when the outward signs of the clerical profession were being consciously abandoned. No longer assumed to be imbued with status and respect and perceived to be a barrier to communication.

⁶⁰ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

⁶¹ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010. Thirty years on Lowe still felt a sense of dissatisfaction with the results because very shortly after completion he moved to East Ham. Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010. This was not a mistake he wanted to make with St Bartholomew's and stayed a considerable time after its launch to see the building develop.

⁶² *Newham Recorder*, 30 March 1983, p. 41.

⁶³ *Newham Recorder*, 6 March 1975, p. 45.

⁶⁴ Interview, Steward, 8 March 2010.

⁶⁵ *Newham Recorder*, 2 April 1980, p. 2.

⁶⁶ *Newham Recorder*, 30 March 1983, p. 41.

⁶⁷ John Adair, *The Becoming Church* (London: SPCK, 1977), p. 72.

⁶⁸ Robin Gill, *Beyond Decline* (London: SCM, 1988), p. 43.

⁶⁹ *Newham Recorder*, 30 March 1983, p. 41.

There was a steely drive about him and Purdy recalled, ‘... [the] skill, determination and dedication of the Rector.’⁷⁰ This sometimes manifested itself in wishing to control all aspects of the project. In a letter dated 4 October 1978 from Lowe to Ken Start he said that no instructions should be made to the architect, Quantity Surveyor or anyone else without his being present or after written approval from him.⁷¹ Yet at times Lowe had to be a diplomat when dealing with other quite strong personalities. His relationship with the head of Springboard Housing was, he admitted stormy at times.⁷²

In an age of supposed decline the role of priest would initially be seen as increasingly narrow and unattractive to imaginative and dynamic personalities. Towler and Coxon had suggested that at a point when all aspects of Church life were in retreat vocation to the priesthood was hardly attractive to an enterprising and ambitious person.⁷³ Traditional avenues of work, not least the conducting of services would be in decline.⁷⁴ Despite this changing role there is anecdotal evidence that clergy in the 1960s and 70s seemed just as industrious and dedicated in their work as they ever had been.⁷⁵ There new avenues of ministry like St Bartholomew’s, filled the void. It could be argued that Lowe and clergy like him were shaping the role to ensure it carried a degree of social status and sufficient stimulus.⁷⁶ Lowe perfectly reflected Towler and Coxon’s analysis of clergy who rejected the exclusively congregational approach to ministry. He was one of the new breed of priest emerging who felt they had important roles in the community and were able to punch above their weight.⁷⁷ The Church was still able to accomplish much at a time when many perceived it to be on its knees.

⁷⁰ Martin Purdy, ‘New Life for an Urban Parish. The Redevelopment of St Bartholomew’s, East Ham’ in *Research Bulletin*, (Birmingham: Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture, 1984), pp. 17-23, p. 21.

⁷¹ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Lowe to Start, 4 October 1978.

⁷² Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Lowe to Start, 1 November 1978.

⁷³ Towler and Coxon, *The Fate of the Anglican Clergy*, p. 191.

⁷⁴ Towler and Coxon, *The Fate of the Anglican Clergy*, p. 204.

⁷⁵ Dewi Morgan, *The Church in Transition. Reform in the Church of England* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1970), p. 103.

⁷⁶ During the project he travelled to Scandinavia to look at how family care was organized there. He was looking particularly at how family centres in Norway, Denmark and Sweden support children’s work. *Newham Recorder*, 14 February 1980, p. 10. He also took a trip to St Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church in New York in April 1981. Chelmsford, ECRO, Letters, A11221. Box 2, Lowe to Bowers the Rector of St Bartholomew’s New York, 27 April 1981.

⁷⁷ Towler and Coxon, *The Fate of the Anglican Clergy*, p. 204.

One reason for these achievements was the sheer energy Lowe demonstrated. In a letter to A. J. Williams of the Diocesan Board of Finance he mentioned the work on the redevelopment, the work on the Pastoral Measure that would revise the Team Ministry, the Docklands group that was set up to work on the Church's response to the Beckton redevelopment and finally a meeting with Canon Patrick Appleford.⁷⁸ His workload was tremendous at times and in one day he was in correspondence with seventeen different agencies regarding the project.⁷⁹ He was the chair of the ecumenical group asked to look at the churches' future work in the Docklands area of Newham.⁸⁰ He was also chair of the central branch of the Labour party, and he was possibly going to be offered a directorship on the London Docklands Development Council.⁸¹ In October 1981 he became a member of Newham Voluntary Agencies Council.⁸² He was as far removed from the contemporary, popular image of the naive, other worldly, shambolic comic vicar represented by comedians such as Dick Emery as it was possible to be.

One example of the unclerical skill he brought to the project was his ability to work with the media. He issued press releases to the *Church Times*, the *Church of England News Paper*, the *Evening Standard*, the *Evening News* the *Newham Recorder* and *Stratford Express* as well as *Radio London*, *Capital Radio* and *LBC*.⁸³ He had hosted a chat-show for *Radio Birmingham* before coming to Newham.⁸⁴ He pushed for a local East London radio station at the height of deregulation. This he felt would increase the sense of community identity.⁸⁵ Local reaction from the press was always very positive, despite a very easy alternative narrative that could have mourned the loss of seventy years of history. With the coming of the bulldozers the *Newham Recorder* said, '...where two world wars and Nazi bombs have failed, financial common sense and dwindling numbers

⁷⁸ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Lowe to Williams, 13 September 1978.

⁷⁹ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to various Charities, 4 May 1979.

⁸⁰ *Newham Recorder*, 6 May 1976, p. 43.

⁸¹ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

⁸² Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 4, St Bartholomew's Parish Newsletter, 18 October 1981.

⁸³ London, SBCA, Press Release, St Bartholomew's East Ham. 2 June 1980.

⁸⁴ *Newham Recorder*, 6 March 1975, p. 45.

⁸⁵ *Newham Recorder*, 2 July 1981, p. 10.

have won.’⁸⁶ Even here he was not willing to pander to cheap popularity. His column for the *Newham Recorder* came to an abrupt end in June 1977 because of the criticism it seemed to produce from council and colleagues alike.⁸⁷ The *Newham Recorder* responded to his resignation on its front cover saying, ‘...he has evoked the displeasure of people less imaginative than himself.’⁸⁸

An aspect of the redevelopment that had significant bearing on Lowe and others was the stress he carried. The pressures that clergy were felt to be under were just beginning to be acknowledged in the 1980s.⁸⁹ One early text exploring this theme was John Sanford’s *Ministry Burnout* (1982).⁹⁰ There was a growing recognition of the pressures faced by clergy but little insight into how to tackle the problem.⁹¹ The emotional and physical cost of a project on Lowe occasionally emerged in the written archives. In the midst of the project Lowe’s father died and he had to step back a little from the St Bartholomew’s project.⁹² He was out of action for July and August 1978.⁹³

Doris Goodchild recalled the demands that Lowe was under at times because of the criticism levelled against him by some.⁹⁴ This pressure even extended to Lowe’s family. For a brief period they had to vacate the Rectory and live in temporary accommodation as the site became uninhabitable because of disruption and danger as the old church was demolished.⁹⁵ In less than a year after St Bartholomew’s grand opening Lowe took a sabbatical.⁹⁶

⁸⁶ *Newham Recorder*, 3 July 1980, p. 42f.

⁸⁷ *Newham Recorder*, 30 June 1977, p. 1.

⁸⁸ *Newham Recorder*, 30 June, 1977 p. 1.

⁸⁹ Paul Welsby, *A History of the Church of England 1945-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 132.

⁹⁰ John A. Sanford, *Ministry Burnout* (Arthur James Ltd, 1982).

⁹¹ Anthony Russell, *The Clerical Profession* (London: SPCK, 1980), p. 289.

⁹² Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Lowe to Eric Adams, 8 May 1978.

⁹³ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Lowe to Purdy, 12 July 1978.

⁹⁴ Interview, Goodchild, 11 March 2010.

⁹⁵ London, SBICA, Minutes of St Bartholomew’s DCC, 4 September 1979.

⁹⁶ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 4, St Bartholomew’s Parish Newsletter, The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost 1984.

At a point at which the role of the parish priest, at least in urban areas, was facing something of a transition Lowe represented a model of the enthusiastic and energetic priest at ease with parts of his community.⁹⁷ He was a modern clergyman facing many of the problems that came with a busy urban parish. His energy enabled the project to succeed but at times this came at a cost to himself and was not without its conflicts with partners. He was skilled at bringing the local media on his side and yet faced controversy over his attitude to perceived failings of council and Church. However, his efforts were not without recognition and he was to rise steadily through the clerical hierarchy to the position of bishop in the Church, some indication of the value that the Church placed in him for his work. A number of clergy engaged in similar projects in Newham were to gain preferment, in part, through such schemes.

Martin Purdy

The Church did not just depend on a gifted and energetic clergyman to aid them in their changing role. Martin Purdy was equally significant in these developments. He was both a respected architect and also theologically literate. He was educated at a Church foundation school and trained under Peter Hammond and Sir Hugh Casson.⁹⁸ Throughout the development he was occupied on his PhD on the work of Blomfield in London.⁹⁹ In no small measure churches were still able to muster highly trained talent for its service. Significantly, a figure like Martin Purdy felt drawn to church design that still offered a meaningful, challenging career opportunity in the 1970s.

He had already been employed by Chelmsford Diocese but was commissioned to look specifically at St Bartholomew's Church. A first draft of Purdy's report was ready by the 7 July 1975. It looked in detail at the changing role of the Church in East Ham.¹⁰⁰ A week later Purdy was appointed the architect to the development.¹⁰¹ It was his creative

⁹⁷ Geoffrey Ahern and Grace Davie, *Inner City God* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1987), p. 104.

⁹⁸ Interview, Purdy, 6 April 2010.

⁹⁹ Purdy, 'The Urban Experience'.

¹⁰⁰ London, SBCA, Martin Purdy, 'Parish of East Ham with St Alban's Upton Park. Research Report' 75/2/WH. October 1975.p. 1.

¹⁰¹ Drawing on past ecumenical experience in Birmingham it was proposed that an inter-denominational working party meet to look at the future use of the site. Rupert E. Davies, *The Church in our Time. An*

hand that was to shape the early projects in Newham, most notably St Bartholomew's and St Mark's, Forest Gate. Indeed, APEC were to undertake all the substantial redevelopments of churches in Newham. He took a significant interest in teaching the congregation, enabling them to think about what church they wanted and to take part in substantial educational programmes that Stephen Lowe initiated. Again this was no hurried, quick fix solution to the problems of East Ham or the inner-city Church. Preparation for the development was labour-intensive but felt to be crucial to any future successes.

The Laity

It was perhaps reasonable to suppose that a highly motivated and energetic clergy, coupled with experts like Martin Purdy, could still be persuaded to work in Newham. Evidence of the decline in the life of the Church of England at this time would be better seen in the role of the laity. The former group after all were paid to do their job, the latter were volunteers. It could be expected that this group were cast into the role of voiceless guinea pigs who would passively accept the leadership of articulate, well educated outsiders, or they would feel so demoralized by decades of decline and stagnation they would be apathetically useless onlookers to these exciting developments. Some commentators did portray the laity in a less than favourable light. Paul said, 'They have seldom been great instructors, though often effective obstructers.'¹⁰² Communities like East Ham had historically rarely been consulted about redevelopment.¹⁰³ If secularization was to have taken a hold in Newham then it would be evident in its dwindling congregations. Despite these initial fears being realised, renewal was possible as clergy and laity forged a new partnership together.

The 1960s saw a flourishing of texts on the place of the laity. The seminal work by Yves Congar, *Lay People in the Church: a Study for a Theology of Laity* (1957), inspired a

Ecumenical History from a British Perspective (London: Epworth, 1979), p. 113. This collaboration never materialized and the work was executed by the Anglican congregations in the East Ham Team alone.

¹⁰² Paul, *A Church by Daylight*, p. 148.

¹⁰³ Michael Collins, *The Likes of Us: A Biography of the White Working Class* (London: Granta Books, 2004), p. 160.

series of studies on the laity from Protestant and Catholic authors. Hendrick Kraemer's *A Theology of the Laity* (1965), responded to Congar's work from a Protestant point of view. Works such as George Austin's *Laity and Priesthood in Tomorrow's Church* (1976), and Ronald Metcalfe's *Sharing Christian Ministry* (1981), and Catholic approaches such as Leonard Doohan's *The Lay Centred Church* (1984), examined the role of the people in the contemporary Church.¹⁰⁴

Lay education was seen as crucial to the preparations for redevelopment, enabling the laity to participate in different aspects of the scheme that facilitated a communal sense of ownership.¹⁰⁵ Early works such as Stephen Verney's *Fire over Coventry* (1964), was one of the first books to advocate serious collaboration between priests and people in the Church of England.¹⁰⁶ Adair still felt that progress was slow in the 1970s.¹⁰⁷ Yet from the end of the 1960s there was an awareness that the Church would have to increasingly rely on an empowered and trained laity if it was to provide a mission to the world. This could have been interpreted as yet further evidence for decline as the Church could no longer depend on a salaried ministry, but equally it was indicative of change prompting fresh expressions of service. There was a growing expectation that clergy had to bring the laity with them in creating a vision for a parish. Lowe very quickly set about preparing the congregation at St Bartholomew's to address the problem of redevelopment. Purdy also wanted a grassroots response to church developments, reflecting a fresh approach to planning in the light of a radical reshaping of Christian theology. The driving force for new buildings had to come from the minister and the congregation.¹⁰⁸

Education was seen as the key to lay involvement. Imaginatively then, one of the most significant projects Lowe initiated was a six week course entitled 'The Church Building,

¹⁰⁴ Yves Congar, *Lay People in the Church: a Study for a Theology of Laity* (S. I. Chapman, 1957), Hendrick Kraemer, *A Theology of the Laity* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1965), George Austin, *Laity and Priesthood in Tomorrow's Church* (London : Church Literature Association, 1976), Ronald Metcalfe, *Sharing Christian Ministry* (London: Mowbray, 1981), Leonard Doohan, *The Lay Centred Church* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1984), p. 10.

¹⁰⁵ Adair, *The Becoming Church*, p. 57.

¹⁰⁶ Stephen Verney, *Fire in Coventry* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), p. 14.

¹⁰⁷ Adair, *The Becoming Church*, p. 67.

¹⁰⁸ Peter Hammond, *Liturgy and Architecture* (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1960), p. 11.

a Burden or a Blessing?’ This course was held at Fellowship House, and, as the outline programme said, was:

...open to everyone interested in the future of church building in Newham and a special welcome would be given to those anxious to participate in the re-development of St Bartholomew’s Church, East Ham.¹⁰⁹

It was hoped that the congregation would discover something of the range of possibilities that were available to them with a new development.¹¹⁰ Guest speakers included J. B Taylor, the then Archdeacon of West Ham, Martin Purdy, J. G. Davies, and Gilbert Cope from the *Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture*. There were also speakers drawn from Newham including Jack Hart, the leader of Newham Council, Ken Boyce, Assistant Director of Newham Social Services. The settlements, missions and charities were represented by Jimmy Froud, General Manger of Aston Charities, Christopher Hill, Director of Newham Community Renewal Programme and Colin Marchant, Baptist minister at West Ham Central Mission.¹¹¹

An insight into the content of the course can be gained from a related exercise Lowe described in his article ‘The Church Building: Sign of Hope or Cause of Despair’ in the *Research Bulletin* (1985). There was a similar education course that he devised with the then Diocesan training officer, Wesley Carr. Wesley was to act as Team consultant under Lowe.¹¹² The content of both courses included theological reflection, what images of God the Church believes in, the place of symbols and control and power that buildings projected.¹¹³ Later on this idea of image was to be of significance when looking at the art commissioned by these churches for their new buildings. Lowe asked the congregation to reflect on what it was to be a church in a changing world.¹¹⁴ The programme was aimed

¹⁰⁹ London SBCE, The Church Building – Burden or Blessing. Outline Programme. Autumn 1976.

¹¹⁰ Purdy, ‘New Life for an Urban Parish’, p. 19.

¹¹¹ London SBCE, The Church Building – Burden or Blessing. Outline Programme. Autumn 1976.

¹¹² Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

¹¹³ Stephen Lowe, ‘Church Building: Sign of Hope or Cause of Despair’, in *Research Bulletin*, (Birmingham: Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture, 1985), pp. 31-34, p. 31.

¹¹⁴ Interview, Steward, 8 March 2010.

at broadening the congregation's horizons and enabling them to see beyond the church and church hall model of development.¹¹⁵

It was true that the St Bartholomew's project did create much tension amongst some laity but the project took nearly eight years to complete, hardly a callous response. Those involved in the redevelopment were not indifferent to the emotional attachment some would have had to the old building. There was a recognition that there might need to be a period of mourning for the old building from some members of the congregation.¹¹⁶ There were potent memories of marriages, baptisms and funerals as well as its survival through the war.¹¹⁷ Lowe was under no illusions about the cost to people of the redevelopment; as he wrote in the parish newsletter for August 1980, 'A lot of people feel very distressed in seeing the church building demolished. It leaves them with feelings of betrayal and sadness.'¹¹⁸ One example of this was a small group of parishioners who formally objected to the redevelopment in early 1980.¹¹⁹

That most significant of resource for the local church, its women, might now be conspicuous by their absence. The spotlight had been turned on them in recent decades. Jeffrey Cox records the crucial role that women played in churches in Lambeth from the 1850s.¹²⁰ The high proportion of women that made up Victorian and Edwardian congregations has also been recognized by authors such as Robin Gill.¹²¹ Yet Callum Brown suggested that it was the social and financial liberation of women in the 1960s

¹¹⁵ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

¹¹⁶ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Minutes of St Bartholomew's Sub-Committee, 26 July 1979.

¹¹⁷ Interview, Steward, 8 March 2010.

¹¹⁸ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 4, The Parish Newsletter, 24 August 1980.

¹¹⁹ London, SBCA, Letters, Christmas to Trillo, March 1980. This resulted in a brief correspondence between Ms Christmas of the Church Commissioners and John Trillo Bishop of Chelmsford. These parishioners' main objections seemed to be the cost of the project at a time of economic decline. They claimed the old church could have been restored at a cost of no more than £6,000. Words like extravagant and unnecessary were used. Other objections were that the old St Bartholomew's was a possible venue for ordination and carol services. The Commissioners felt bound to take these objections seriously and were seeking the advice of the Bishop. This prompted a further concern from the Commissioners as to whether there were adequate funds for the whole project.

¹²⁰ Jeffrey Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth, 1870-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 50.

¹²¹ Gill, *The Myth of the Empty Church*, p. 176.

that led to the rapid decline in Church adherence.¹²² Grace Davie felt that despite the decline in religion in the latter quarter of the twentieth-century women were still making a considerable contribution to Church life.¹²³ Certainly women were playing a significant function in the life of inner-city churches like St Bartholomew's.

St Bartholomew's was to benefit from the growing empowered women of the congregation as British society changed. They were to play a major role on the steering group of the new development. Nine members of the District Church Council were women in 1979 including Doris Goodchild as Treasurer and Linda Steward who was churchwarden.¹²⁴ Women were to contribute to the project, from creating the altar frontals for the new church to managing its finances. It was here that women like Linda Steward felt they discovered not just a vocation but their identity. Both Linda Steward, a former churchwarden, and Shirley Vettors, who was the first parish administrator of St Bartholomew's, were to be ordained together. Perhaps in middle class communities women's liberation and economic affluences did lead to a drift from the Church as Brown suggested. In Newham women like Doris Goodchild and Linda Steward were amongst a growing number of women who were empowered by employment but who reached out for and discovered a more fulfilling role in their Church.

A very small and easy to overlooked aspect of their work was a women's group set up to design and make the altar frontals.¹²⁵ There had been a revival of interest in church embroidery from the 1960s.¹²⁶ Needlework could be dismissed as monotonous, women's work, and Roseskia Parker, in *The Subversive Stitch* (1984), has pointed out the ambivalent attitude the Church has had to female embroidery in the past.¹²⁷ Although this

¹²² Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 10.

¹²³ Grace Davie, *Europe: the Exceptional Case. Parameters of Faith in the Modern World* (London: Darton Longman and Todd, 2002), p. 8.

¹²⁴ London, SBCA, Minutes of the St Bartholomew's DCC, 11 November 1979.

¹²⁵ London, SBCA, Minutes of St Bartholomew's Redevelopment Sub-Committee, 20 October 1982. £601 to £774 was set aside for this work. London, SBCA, Minutes of St Bartholomew's Redevelopment Sub-Committee, 29 September 1982.

¹²⁶ Constance Howard, *Twentieth-century Embroidery in Great Britain 1964-1977* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1985), p. 17.

¹²⁷ Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch. Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London: The Women's Press, 1984), p. 20.

could be seen to be a very traditional role for the women of a congregation to engage in, Parker argues there were now radical elements to this customary aspect of women's work, through identity, creativity and solidarity.¹²⁸ St Bartholomew's had a useful resource in the leader of the group, Janet Mayo, who had a degree in theology and was a dress designer for the Royal Opera Company.¹²⁹ That a Newham church could draw upon such local talent reflected the colour and depth many of these inner-city congregations had.

The embroidery work at St Bartholomew's had a radical edge to it. Where often in 1970s the design for needlework projects reflected an escape from urban and a return to rural images, St Bartholomew's was to decorate the chapel altar frontal with a sky-line of the town including the gas works, dock cranes and town hall (Fig 3.2).¹³⁰

The side chapel's frontal would be a simple but striking design of important buildings around the parish. A series of photographs were taken as models, the only overt Christian symbolism being the three parish worship centres.¹³¹ This was a further example of the consistent approach to the building that wished to integrate the life of the community with the life of the Church. Newham's sky line was in effect the new holy city adorning the altar of St Bartholomew's.

¹²⁸ Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, p. 203ff.

¹²⁹ London, SBCA, Minutes of St Bartholomew's Redevelopment Sub-Committee, 21 April 1982.

¹³⁰ Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, p. 205.

¹³¹ London, SBCA, Minutes of St Bartholomew's Redevelopment Sub-Committee, 16 June 1982.



Figure 3.2 Altar frontal of St Bartholomew's, East Ham, displaying the cityscape of Newham including the Docks, Beckton Gas Works, tower blocks, East Ham Town Hall, the old St Bartholomew's, St Mary's, East Ham, the new St Bartholomew's, St Alban's and Fellowship House. The author's collection.

Nor were these endeavours tokenistic. Quality would not be expected to take second place to this lay involvement. Lowe was concerned that the whole building reflected a high level of skill. As Linda Steward recalled there was an expectation of a superior standard, of something splendid for the Church.¹³² Lowe felt that people in East London simply accepted second best and part of the role of the Church was to raise people's expectations.¹³³ High quality materials were chosen throughout the building.¹³⁴ A mark of the standard of the products Doris Goodchild recalled was that most of the furnishings lasted over three decades.¹³⁵ As Lowe said when he returned to the centre after nearly

¹³² Interview, Steward, 8 March 2010.

¹³³ *Newham Recorder*, 4 September 1975, p. 12.

¹³⁴ Purdy, 'New Life for an Urban Parish', p. 22.

¹³⁵ Interview, Goodchild, 11 March 2010.

thirty years, ‘...we were always determined to make this a quality building...’¹³⁶ One way of achieving this goal was to sensitively offer work that was within the skills base of the congregation. The main altar frontal was to be made up of a patch work of material that each member of the sewing group could work on individually.¹³⁷ This was an important and accessible way for members of the congregation to make their practical mark on the project.

Communication was another important way of developing ownership. There was a concern to keep the wider church community informed of progress. Much of the detailed discussion and consent for the redevelopment took place with the professionals and through the redevelopment sub-committee, Parochial Church Council (PCC) and District Church Council (DCC). Key discussions were thrown open for debate with the wider congregation as in the case of where to move to for worship when the church was being rebuilt.¹³⁸ There were public events to display the details of the redevelopment.¹³⁹ A strategy was planned for the grand opening with a meeting held at which forty members of the congregation attended. It was hoped that the grand opening would be a royal occasion. This was not seen as an ending but a beginning as Lowe said in the parish newsletter, St Bartholomew’s needed to be, ‘...a proper instrument of mission within the Parish of East Ham.’¹⁴⁰ The parish newsletter was regularly employed to publicise progress. This monthly publication had articles about the redevelopment in almost every issue from 1980 to the building’s opening.

Alongside the dedication service were a series of events aimed at further publicising the work of the new centre. The local Methodist church was invited to an evening service; there were guided tours during the first week, an exhibition on the history of East Ham from the local museum, and a concert by the Newham Academy including Fauré’s

¹³⁶ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

¹³⁷ This is strikingly similar to a design executed by a *Women’s Institute* group who worked on a banner for the Festival of Britain described in Bridgeman and Drury’s *Needlework and Illustrated History* (1978). Harriet Bridgeman and Elizabeth Drury, *Needlework and Illustrated History* (London: Paddington Press, 1978), p. 81.

¹³⁸ London, SBCA, Minutes of St Bartholomew’s DCC, 11 November 1979.

¹³⁹ London, SBCA, Minutes of St Bartholomew’s Sub-Committee, 12 September 1979.

¹⁴⁰ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 4, Parish Newsletter, 28 November 1982.

Requiem. In early May there was also a Gospel Rock concert attracting a different audience.¹⁴¹

Alongside the ownership of the congregation was the ownership of a wider community, many of whom were now from other faiths. St Bartholomew's was confident enough to support those who had no allegiance to Christianity. In the early 1980s there was an Asian Women's Project working at Fellowship House. Linda Steward recalled how difficult breaking down barriers between cultures was at times.¹⁴² Despite this it was hoped that the work of the centre would include a broad range of peoples and age groups.

Communities like East Ham had historically rarely been consulted about redevelopment.¹⁴³ The St Bartholomew's project attempted to engage people's interest and foster ownership of the project. There was a fine balance between involving the congregation and making up for the dearth of skills and energy available.¹⁴⁴ Many of the most arduous roles in the redevelopment inevitably fell to Lowe and other professionals. Where the community could and should have been consulted the project invariably aimed to do so.

Chelmsford

It would be imprudent to overlook how strategic a role Chelmsford Diocese and the wider Church played in the St Bartholomew's development. It could have significantly hindered its progress and felt just as vulnerable as those at the grass roots when it came to difficult and irrevocable decisions about the site. Perhaps most revealing of all was its commitment to the inner-city despite the problems the Deanery of Newham was facing.

Chelmsford Diocese had never been the most prestigious of posts in the Church of England. It was made up of the unfashionable end of East London and the swathe of Essex. Yet it was one of the most populous and geographically diverse parts of England.

¹⁴¹ London, SBCA, Flyer Advertising Events, c. 1983.

¹⁴² Interview, Steward, 8 March 2010.

¹⁴³ Collins, *The Likes of Us*, p. 160.

¹⁴⁴ Paul, *A Church by Daylight*, p. 149.

A microcosm of British society, it represented ministry that could be a model for the whole nation. Perhaps because it was not in the spotlight it could take risks and experiment. It had taken what were to be far sighted steps to deal with the issue of obsolete buildings.¹⁴⁵ Most creatively of all it wished to emulate the work of Davies in Birmingham and even seemed to have headhunted key personnel to achieve this goal. Through the work of the Archdeacon of Southend, Peter Bridges and the architect, Martin Purdy, a Research and Development Unit had been established to support struggling parishes. This was inspired directly by J. G. Davies and Gilbert Cope's *Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture*, based in Birmingham.¹⁴⁶ It was evidence that buildings were still at the heart of Anglican ministry. Experimental work carried out in Birmingham through people like Purdy and Lowe were to exert a significant influence on future redevelopments in Newham.

Power was very clearly in the hands of the central diocesan administration and this was none more evident than when in June 1978 Chelmsford Diocesan Pastoral Committee gave the go-ahead for the project to develop a final design and move to the full planning stage. As a sign of goodwill, the committee decided that it would pay for the architect's fees up to this point. This was not an excuse for the congregation to sit on its laurels and it was hoped that the local church's efforts in fundraising would increase as a result.¹⁴⁷ By 5 June Lowe was instructing Purdy to proceed to the next stage of the scheme.¹⁴⁸ On the same day he contacted the contractors to request quotes for demolition of the old St Bartholomew's, hoping that hard core and metals from the building would offset the costs. (Fig 3.3)¹⁴⁹

Lowe found the diocese very supportive through its personnel and funding. This he attributed to Chelmsford's sense of responsibility to the poorer ends of the diocese.¹⁵⁰ Lowe believed that key figures in the diocese who encouraged him were the Bishop of

¹⁴⁵ Purdy, 'The Urban Experience', p. 385.

¹⁴⁶ Both Bridges and Purdy had worked for the *Institute*.

¹⁴⁷ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Chelmsford Diocesan Pastoral Committee to Lowe, 5 June 1978.

¹⁴⁸ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Lowe to Purdy, 5 June 1978.

¹⁴⁹ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221, Box 1, Letters, Lowe to David Knight, 5 June 1978.

¹⁵⁰ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

Barking, James Adams, the two Archdeacons of West Ham who oversaw the project, John Taylor, and Peter Dawes and Wesley Carr, head of in-service training at the time.¹⁵¹ Lowe believed a unique and very important support for churches in the west of the diocese was the London over the Border Fund. This had been set up at the end of the nineteenth century from the sale of church lands in London to support those parts of the city that were growing over the official border into Essex.¹⁵² It later provided key seed funding and its committee was to administer the Church Urban Fund (CUF) that assisted other similar projects in Newham.

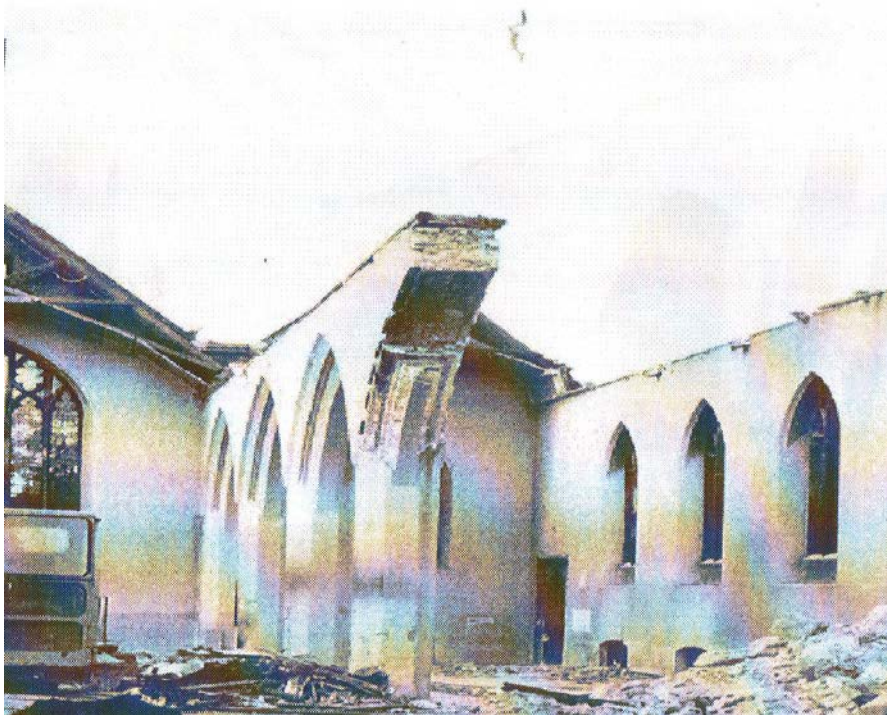


Figure 3.3 St Bartholomew's Church in the process of demolition.
With the permission of the Rector and PCC of the East Ham Team Ministry.

Breaking new ground was felt to be a gamble and there were many who doubted the project would succeed. As late as June 1980 there was still some concerns about the feasibility of the overall project given there was now a short fall of £100,000 on the

¹⁵¹ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

¹⁵² Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

church's part. The Diocesan Board of Finance refused to underwrite this amount but they did accede to move forward with the demolition.¹⁵³ There was more than a hint that the central office of Chelmsford Diocese found this process unnerving. Lowe was to comment in a speech given at the opening of the centre on: 'Those at Guy Harling's Office of the Diocese of Chelmsford who certainly went a whiter shade of pale at the mention of St Bart's and probably still do.'¹⁵⁴ All of this was indicative of how revolutionary this approach to urban ministry was for Chelmsford. Yet the willingness for such institutions to take risks was further evidence that they were not cowed by the dilemma of perceived decline.

The Church Commissioners were also cautious at first and were concerned that the Church would get adequate reimbursement from the sale of part of the site and that the overall scheme was financially feasible. Despite others' pessimism there grew up for some a determination to succeed as Linda Steward said, 'I think there was an air about us, to hell with what they think, yeah we're going to get on with this.'¹⁵⁵

What could have been dismissed as a rather unrealistic project succeeded because there was still a vitality to the Church in Newham and within the bounds of Chelmsford Diocese that challenged the preconceived notions of decline and depression that the crisis of the 1960s ushered in. But this was not just a creative project in its social aspect; it was the theological approach it took that indicated a depth to this and other initiatives that lifts it from the mundane.

Theology

One of the most telling aspects of this scheme was the theology that underpinned it. Indeed the fact that the endeavour was rooted in theology at all was of some significance. There had been a plethora of books published relating to church building from the post-war era of reconstruction. Works such as Addleshaw and Etchells' *The Architectural*

¹⁵³ London, SBCA, Minutes of DBF Sub-Committee, 4 June 1980.

¹⁵⁴ London, SBCA, Stephen Lowe, draft speech for the Royal visit, undated, c. 1983. Guy Harlings was the name of the building that housed the Diocesan Offices, named after a former owner of the site.

¹⁵⁵ Interview, Steward, 8 March 2010.

Setting of Anglican Worship (1948), D. F. Martin-Smith's 'A Dual Purpose Architecture' in *Sixty Post-war Churches* (1956), Peter Hammond's *Liturgy and Architecture* (1960), and *Towards a Church Architecture* (1962), David Watkin's *Morality and Architecture* (1977), and Roman Catholic responses like Justus Dahinden's *New Trends in Architecture* (1967), were to influence fashions in church design.¹⁵⁶ However, they presented for some like Purdy a very traditional approach to church building that only took on the veneer of modernity. An excellent example of this traditional shape in a modern skin was the development at St Paul's, Harlow; a church built in the late 1950s for the new town in Essex.¹⁵⁷

St Paul's, Harlow, is a prime example of a conservative building created under the cloak of modernism. Designed by Humphrys and Hurst and opened in 1959 it was described at the time as 'the finest Church to be built in Essex since the war.' Despite having a mosaic by John Piper its design came from an earlier age. Most of the furniture was fixed, including the pews, making the building inflexible. It had a spire that rose to ninety-five feet, making repair difficult and costly. The bell tower was supposed to be illuminated but the mechanism broke and could not be repaired. It had an immovable font and finally it had a Royal Coat of Arms that harked back to an earlier Elizabethan age.

Thus the most recent publications from the 1940s on church architecture were felt by some architects like Martin Purdy to be derivative and weak on theology.¹⁵⁸ Worse, there was a lack of creative thought around the function of Church in the modern age that uncritically took on the concept of a holy space.¹⁵⁹ It could be expected that in this time of transition and change for the Church expediencies would have been an overriding concern for such developments. This research uncovers a significant theological approach

¹⁵⁶ See the bibliography for full details. Addleshaw and Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship*, Martin-Smith, *A Dual Purpose Architecture*, Hammond, *Liturgy and Architecture*, and *Towards a Church Architecture*, (London: Architectural Press, 1962), David Watkin, *Morality and Architecture: The Development of a Theme in Architectural History and Theory from the Gothic Revival to the Modern Movement*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), Justus Dahinden, *New Trends in Church Architecture* (London: Studio Vista, 1967).

¹⁵⁷ For more details about the fabric of St Paul's see *The Essex Countryside*, January 1963, p. 106.

¹⁵⁸ Hammond, *Liturgy and Architecture*, p. 4.

¹⁵⁹ Peter F. Smith, *Third Millennium Churches* (London: Galliard Ltd, 1972), p. 24.

to community and church buildings that has been overlooked. Areas like East and West Ham had been laboratories for experimental theology for quite some time. As was noted in Chapter Two, the Oxford philosopher T. H. Green had influenced men who went on to establish the settlement movement and the fact that Mansfield House in Plaistow has a memorial to him is indicative of his influence. In turn his disciples, like the sainted Charles Gore, developed a theology of sacrificial love that was to shape Anglican pastoral practice in the closing decades of the last century.¹⁶⁰ This sense of service was to underpin much of the outreach work of missions, settlements and parish initiatives that justified their work in the face of an audience that needed their care but seemed indifferent to its message.

Most impressively of all it was the writings of a Professor at Birmingham University, J. G. Davies, who was to have the most significant influence on the shape of Newham churches. As has been noted his pupils Martin Purdy and John Taylor came to work within Chelmsford diocese and Stephen Lowe was set the task of making some of that theology concrete in a church project at Woodgate Valley. Through these men J. G. Davies' influence was to be strongly felt in Newham. Significantly, this was a theology that was shaped by a response to the prevailing sense of secularization. For Davies' approach was to do nothing less than re-site the place of religion back into the public domain. A domain it had been intellectually retreating from since the challenges highlighted by Max Weber. He had argued that religion was declining in the face of rationalistic capitalism and an Enlightenment that had reduced the sphere of faith through the processes of 'disenchantment'.¹⁶¹

Davies produced a number of works and reflected a wide interest in many aspects of liturgy and worship. However, it was his publication of *The Secular Use of Church Buildings* (1968), *Every Day God: Encountering the Holy in World and Worship* (1979), and the work of *The Research Bulletin* that were to have a profound influence on St

¹⁶⁰ Charles Gore, *Dissertations on Subjects Connected with the Incarnation* (London, John Murray, 1895), p. 90.

¹⁶¹ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976), p. 72 .

Bartholomew's. Central to Davies' approach was the fundamental integrity of all aspects of the life of a church and community centre. Churches were not fragile shrines to a god that needed protection. Nor were they utilitarian dual function buildings used for different purposes on different days. The life of church and community centre had a holistic purpose and goal. Churches were paradigms of the Kingdom of God; models of what Christians were called to celebrate and build in the world outside the walls of the church-plant.

An anathema to Davies and his followers was the belief in a narrow sense of sacred space focused on the worship area of a church. Davies argued that this was a false dichotomy. As a later commentator on Davies' life wrote:

The lesson to be drawn was that the Church should reclaim its connection with the totality of Christian existence by the manner in which its churches are built and used, particularly by shunning any visible separation of sacred and secular activities.¹⁶²

Protestant theology had been in his opinion misled by concepts advocated by authors such as Rudolf Otto in *The Idea of the Holy* (1923).¹⁶³ This had justified a sacred space that created a sense of numinous for worshippers. Davies argues that it was not just that this numinous ceased to have meaning in a modern world. It was for the Christian a false division in a creation where God dwelt everywhere.¹⁶⁴ Other authors such as Kathleen Bliss, who was also to influence Martin Purdy, were dismissive of the notion of atmosphere.¹⁶⁵ Bliss wrote, 'To many Christians, however, the idea of a church as a shrine has something offensive about it.'¹⁶⁶ What was offensive was not the concept of

¹⁶² B. S. Benedikt and D. W. Hardy, *John Gordon Davies (1919-1990) an appreciation and a bibliography of his published works* (Birmingham: The Hoyloft Press, 2003), p. 9f.

¹⁶³ Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*, trans. by John W Harvey Humphrey Milford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923).

¹⁶⁴ J. G. Davies, *Every Day God: Encountering the Holy in World and Worship* (London: SCM 1973), p. 53.

¹⁶⁵ Kathleen Bliss, *The Future of Religion* (London: Watts and Co Ltd, 1969), p. 15.

¹⁶⁶ Bliss, *The Future of Religion*, p. 19.

the sacred *per se*, this was not a rejection of a sacral realm, significantly, for the secularization debate it was a rejection of the notion that this sacral real could be limited to one place or another. Instead, this was an holistic approach that was summed up in the concept of *Shalom* that was at the heart of Davies' and his disciples' thinking.¹⁶⁷ This thought chimed with a growing sense amongst some Christians that Christ was not uniquely the Church's possession and was to be encountered within and without its boundaries.¹⁶⁸ For Davies, incarnation meant that all aspects of human life were touched by the Divine and in the community aspects of health, recreation and social care true holiness was encountered.¹⁶⁹ Moreover, a sense of a holy shrine seemed outmoded to a modern Western audience in the late 70s.¹⁷⁰ The revolution in social outlook and theology that placed emphasis on the ordinary man and woman and the humanity of Christ were to find fruition in the Church as community centre.¹⁷¹

The Church's starting point was not its own agenda but the world's.¹⁷² Purdy purposely designed the church at Woodgate Valley to reach out to all the activities in a building.¹⁷³ The juxtaposition of secular activities next to worship space could be an opportunity for mission and conserve precious financial resources.¹⁷⁴ There was also a practical dimension as well. Lowe was uncomfortable with spending a large amount of money on the church area. In a letter to Purdy he wrote, 'I can see no justification for a single purpose area of that sort of size in a building where finance is as tight as it is here.'¹⁷⁵

The most visible expression of Davies' expansion of the sacred into the ordinary was a rejection of the utilitarian model of Church design that had been a vogue in the post-war

¹⁶⁷ J. G. Davies, *The Secular use of Church Buildings* (New York: Seabury Press, 1968), p. 210.

¹⁶⁸ Anon, *The Church for Others and the Church for the World: a quest for structures for missionary congregations. The final report* (Geneva: WCC, 1968), p. 11.

¹⁶⁹ Davies, *The Secular use of Church Buildings*, p. 209.

¹⁷⁰ Harold Turner, *From Temple to Meeting House: The Phenomenology and Theology of Places of Worship* (The Hague: Moton Publishers, 1979), p. 333.

¹⁷¹ See Chapter Two of this Thesis examining the widening perceptions of Christianity.

¹⁷² Anon, *The Church for Others Structures for Missionary Congregations* (Geneva: WCC, 1968), p. 20.

¹⁷³ There is a significant critique of the Woodgate Valley project by Nigel Waterfield, 'Woodgate Valley Church Centre 1972-82: A Critique in *Research Bulletin* (Birmingham: Birmingham Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture, 1983), pp. 22-41, p. 22 ff.

¹⁷⁴ London, SBICA, Minutes of the SBDSC, 8 February 1977.

¹⁷⁵ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Lowe to Purdy, 12 July 1978.

era. The dual purpose church, with screened off altar, was felt to be very insufficient to those associated with St Bartholomew's. It was often an economical response to the pressing need for church buildings after the war.¹⁷⁶ As Purdy said, if '...you couldn't afford anything else... you partitioned God behind a flimsy screen.'¹⁷⁷ Part sacred space and part community hall, it was to be seen as serving neither the sacred nor the secular functions of a church well.¹⁷⁸ Purdy suggested that Davies was totally against what appeared to be the marginalization of the Divine, to '...lock God away into a cupboard...'¹⁷⁹ The vision of St Bartholomew's as an integrated whole was to fly in the faces of a prevailing sense that in a godless age, God and the clergy could be set aside.¹⁸⁰

This sense of unity of form and function, the sacred found in the secular realm, bled into the liturgical life of the community in East Ham from its inception. As has been noted the altar frontal was one example of this. From its genesis the Church wanted to make the connection between Christ and the world. The prayers at the dedication service for St Bartholomew's related different aspects of the life of the Church to the life of the complex as a whole. The altar was linked with the fellowship and service offered at the day care centre and lunch club. The font was linked with the children's work, preschool and Sunday school. The prayer at the lectern spoke of giving sight to the blind and letting the broken victim go free linked to the healing work of the doctors, the council and voluntary groups in the building.¹⁸¹ A window was deliberately set into the wall so that passersby could look into the church and the congregation look out into the community. The building was forming a dialogue between the world and the congregation that ensured the Church was not an escape from the reality of life but an engagement with it. This was the crux of what the St Bartholomew's project aimed to be. As one report said a new building would, '...allow God's work to be performed within the community.'¹⁸²

¹⁷⁶ D. F. Martin-Smith, *A Dual Purpose Architecture, in Sixty Post-War Churches: Churches, Church Centres, Dual-Purpose Churches* (London: Incorporated Church Building Society, 1956), pp. 6-8, p. 6.

¹⁷⁷ Interview, Purdy, 6 April 2010.

¹⁷⁸ Martin-Smith, *A Dual Purpose Architecture*, p. 9.

¹⁷⁹ Interview, Purdy, 6 April 2010. Davies explores this issue in Davies, *Every Day God*, p. 27.

¹⁸⁰ Towler and Coxon, *The Fate of the Anglican Clergy*, p. 192.

¹⁸¹ London, SBCA, Dedication of the New St Bartholomew's Church and Centre by the Bishop of Chelmsford, 23 April 1983.

¹⁸² London, SBCA, Gordon Owen, St Bartholomew's Church Report for the Parochial Church Council Meeting, to be held on 13 June 1977.

As has been noted, Callum Brown asserts that long cherished protocols that bound the nation together and were rooted in a Christian discourse were rapidly being eroded from the nation's consciousness from the 1960s. Many of these protocols that he references, from the liberalising of divorce laws, to the removal of prescriptive sexual practices, were being abandoned and not just by a worldly society.¹⁸³ Some Newham clergy entered into this debate, many voicing a more liberal approach to sexual ethics. Indeed it could be argued that the vacuum these protocols left was willingly filled by a new agenda of community, inclusion, respect and equality that these church and community centres were to epitomise. This was not just the Church acquiring trendy values but was rooted a belief that redemption was the total restoration of all things in Christ.¹⁸⁴ Far from the Church being left high and dry by the abandonment of the old morality some were actively engaged in forging a new one.

A term like the Kingdom of God was to have particular resonance with those associated with these developments.¹⁸⁵ This reflected a growing need for the concept of the Kingdom as a potent metaphor for engagement.¹⁸⁶ The Kingdom was to be fulfilled through the witness and life of the Church.¹⁸⁷ Beeson went further and suggested the Church was not the end itself but a stage in relation to the more powerful reality of the Kingdom that Christ spoke of in the Gospels.¹⁸⁸ This meant that the Church both initiated signs of the Kingdom and also was the witness to them in the world. They presided over the community centre and enabled the Kingdom to flourish within it. Davies felt that the

¹⁸³ *Newham Recorder* regularly featured shifting attitudes to personal morality and what purported to be traditional Christian values. There were conservative responses to *O Calcutta* from a Vicar in Forest Gate, 18 January 1973, p. 11. The Vicar of St Barnabas', Manor Park refused to support *The Festival of Light* campaign, 15 February 1973, p. 16, there was support for the ordination of women, 22 August 1974, p. 52, a curate from East Ham seemed to be relaxed about sex before marriage, 11 March 1976, p. 37. There was even a softening of attitude towards homosexuality from church leaders recorded in 13 May 1976, p.11.

¹⁸⁴ Brian Frost, *The Secular in the Sacred* (Norfolk: Galliard, 1972), p. 6.

¹⁸⁵ Davies, *The Secular use of Church Buildings*, p. 208. Father Scott, the then Rector of Plaistow, found the term particularly helpful in Laurie Blaney, 'The Position and Practice of Anglicanism in an Urban Priority Area, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Essex, 1996), p. 284. Kingdom language was used by Steven Lowe, Jane Freeman, Martin Wallace, Brian Lewis, Don Jones and Anne Cross when discussing their ministry.

¹⁸⁶ Turner, *From Temple to Meeting House*, p. 322.

¹⁸⁷ Davies, *The Secular use of Church Buildings*, p. 208.

¹⁸⁸ Beeson, *The Church of England in Crisis*, p. 51.

New Testament concept of the Kingdom was not the wielding of two distinct realms of sacred and a secular but the fusion of these concepts in harmony.¹⁸⁹ Thus there should be no false demarcation zone between the earthly and heavenly.

In interview Lowe accepted that he found the idea of the Kingdom rather than the Church the more relevant concept when he said:

I think it was the fact that issues of social justice, issues of Kingdom theology, issues around a gospel that actually was there for people, on the edge of society and that anything that smacked of congregationalism for me was totally unsatisfactory.¹⁹⁰

The Church wanted to be a servant to the community.¹⁹¹ Thus the Church took on a sacramental function, the outward expression of the ideals of what church means to its users.¹⁹² Smith describes this in his 'Diakonic Post-Script' as the servant function of a church.¹⁹³ Terms like 'people of God' and 'servant' were to resonate particularly with churches like St Bartholomew's as its mission reflected a growing concern for consensus and democracy and a need to engage with the world in issues of social justice.¹⁹⁴ Lowe felt that the Newham churches were missing an opportunity to build community because so many of them were locked during the week.¹⁹⁵

This adoption of J. G. Davies' theology was not without amendment. Neither Stephen Lowe nor the congregation of St Bartholomew's were passive in their response to his approach. One of the most significant aspects of Davies' theology was his rejection of what he saw as outmoded symbols of the past that took the form of external cross or side chapel.¹⁹⁶ St Bartholomew's was a compromise in its ideology. A clear example was the

¹⁸⁹ Davies, *The Secular use of Church Buildings*, p. 236.

¹⁹⁰ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

¹⁹¹ Beeson, *The Church of England in Crisis*, p. 51f.

¹⁹² Turner, *From Temple to Meeting House*, p. 329.

¹⁹³ Smith, *Third Millennium Churches*, p. 97.

¹⁹⁴ Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Garden City New York: Doubleday and Co Inc, 1974), p. 28.

¹⁹⁵ *Newham Recorder*, 14 April 1977, p. 4.

¹⁹⁶ See Nigel Waterfield, 'Woodgate Valley Church Centre 1972-82', pp. 23-26.

creation of a side chapel in the church. Davies was uncomfortable with even this suggestion of a demarcated sacred space. The church in St Bartholomew's would not be open to any meeting but only to specific cultural activities that were felt to be in sympathy with it use. J. G. Davies' vision of a church totally merged into a community complex was, Lowe felt, too radical for East Ham.¹⁹⁷ It was rumoured that the altar at Woodgate Valley doubled up as a piece of sports equipment. There were to be no table tennis games over St Bartholomew's altar. What was produced was a flexible space that was open to the public whenever the centre was unlocked.

Even the cross, Davies felt, was loaded with a theology that deterred people from Christianity. It is significant that in other buildings Davies had a hand in creating this external symbol of church was hotly debated.¹⁹⁸ Again this quite radical rejection of the primary Christian symbol could be viewed as a further example of a liberalising agenda that was embarrassed by the past. Something more significant may have been occurring. It was possible that a church could have an identity even without a cross. This may actually have spoken of a greater confidence in the impact a church might have on its community. This rejection of overt symbolism was felt to be an attempt not to deter people from entering the church.

Its design may have rejected the narrow notion of holy space, or dual function but how people accessed it and utilised it could not be controlled. Ironically, the new St Bartholomew's church could be treated, by some, as sacred space. St Bartholomew's church could be accessed by anyone who wanted to pray, light a candle, or sit quietly, in a space open nearly twelve hours a day. The old, locked, shrine had been replaced by a much more open arena. The reality was that to some it was a sacred space to retreat to in the midst of a busy day. Indeed this was an age when the spiritual was to re-emerge in society thanks to the burgeoning of new religious movements.¹⁹⁹ To others the church

¹⁹⁷ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

¹⁹⁸ Martin Purdy, 'The United Reformed Church, St Helens: A Continuing Approach Towards a Relevant Symbolism', in *Research Bulletin* (Birmingham: Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture, 1976), pp. 15-19, p. 18.

¹⁹⁹ Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 36.

was a corridor to pass through from one community room to the next. For the people who commissioned it and those who designed it, theologically, the life of the centre and the life of the Church were expected to be integrated. Both altar and meeting room were potentially sacred space. Most obviously, it offered an open, warm and generous arena for public worship that could not have contrasted more with its former self. The Anglicans had a better tool for mission in East Ham. The rejection of the notion of a demarcated sacred space did not mean that religious objects were without value. The font was the only significant object that they wanted to transfer from the old building (Fig 3.4).

Lowe was concerned that this would be removed delicately. It was made of Hopton Wood stone and this was prone to cracking. If the font was badly damaged the church wanted it broken up into fragments no longer recognizable as a font and then possibly donated to a local art department. When it was removed it should be stored properly and as the Minutes said, ‘...not be left irreverently around...’²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ London, SBCA, Minutes of the Pre-contract Meeting for Demolition of St Bartholomew’s Church, 27 May 1980.



Figure 3.4 Font at St Bartholomew's Church, East Ham.

The author's collection.

The new church would be flexible and human in scale. By May 1977 the basic outline of the church was proposed. This would be a worship area with seating of up to 250 which could be extended to 500 people thanks to movable partition walls. The building would need easy access for weddings and funeral.²⁰¹ The chapel would be fitted with an aumbry for the reserved sacrament.²⁰² The seating would be flexible to make provision for normal Sunday congregations and the occasional larger service; the sanctuary would be on a raised platform. It should constantly remain flexible and capable of change and

²⁰¹ London, SBCA, Minutes of St Bartholomew's Development Committee: A Brief Outline of its Work and Thought up to 31 May 1977.

²⁰² London, SBCA, Letters, Fisher to Lowe, 30 November 1979.

adaptation to new needs.²⁰³ Gone were the days of providing auditoriums for vast congregations.²⁰⁴

Funding

One indication of a continuing power and influence within the Church was money. Funding was going to be an essential part of the project and one that a great deal of Lowe's time was to be taken up with. The Church in these decades could still call upon substantial financial support from charitable bodies that valued and trusted its work. The Church was readjusting itself to the welfare state. Yet this was a period of transition when the voluntary sector would begin to be called upon to deliver mainline services as the state retreated from welfare provision. The Church was well placed to fulfil some of this work. Newham was a known place of deprivation. The Church was skilled at networking with outside agencies. Despite the enormity of the task Lowe was seen as an expert in matters of finance. As Purdy said to the artist John Bridgeman, 'It might be as well to enlist Stephen's skilful charms in negotiating tricky financial deals.'²⁰⁵ The joint project could draw upon both Church and social funding. There was an expectation that the laity had to be more deeply committed which in East Ham's case resulted in considerable lay involvement in raising money.²⁰⁶ Imaginative sources of funding were found and a firm financial base was laid for the future centre.

²⁰³ J. A. T. Robinson introduction in Gilbert Cope, *Making the Building Serve the Liturgy. Studies in the Re-ordering of Churches* (London: Mowbray and Co, 1962), p. 14.

²⁰⁴ Sound was an important consideration of the new church and there was a modern speaker system installed so that people could hear in all parts of the church. London, SBCA, Guide to St Bartholomew's Church and Centre. c. 1983, p. 2. Provision was made for new types of media for communication and presentation including audio visual aids, film projectors and video recorders and the whole church could be blacked out for film presentations. London, SBCA, Guide to St Bartholomew's Church and Centre. c. 1983, p. 3. The early remit for the Birmingham students included high-fidelity facilities. London, SBCA, Minutes of the St Bartholomew's Development Sub-Committee, 8 February 1977. This reflected quite imaginative thinking in the early 1980s. The whole project was seen as state of the art at the time. London, SBCA, Commemorative Brochure of the Opening by HMQ. c. 1983, p. 1.

²⁰⁵ London, SBCA, Letters, Purdy to Bridgeman, 20 January 1982.

²⁰⁶ George Austin, *Laity and Priesthood in Tomorrow's Church* (London : Church Literature Association, 1976), p. 2.

Philanthropic organizations had to face a period of readjustment after the creation of the welfare state.²⁰⁷ Works such as David Owen's *English Philanthropy 1660-1960* (1964), noted that the United Kingdom could not command the same resources that charities in other countries could due, in part to a much stronger public sector.²⁰⁸ Yet the financial climate at the time prompted a reassessment of government support for the welfare state.²⁰⁹ It was Lowe's pioneering work in drawing on new sources of funding that were to develop future projects in Newham.

East Ham was ironically fortunate in its location as an area of known deprivation. This helped win financial support for the project. Purdy was to comment in his PhD; '...the Church is in a stronger position to press for aid in an area such as Newham than it is in the better heeled suburbs.'²¹⁰

One of the most remarkable achievements of the four projects examined in this thesis was their ability to draw in funding from outside agencies. This is more impressive given the financial state of the buildings at the time of development. They were able to initiate a public and private partnership that was in advance of its time in encouraging the community sector to support statutory services. Also at a time of national financial crisis Christians in East Ham were trusted to develop a sustainable and much-needed project that warranted public funds, as well as charitable bequests. St Bartholomew's church had no reserves to rely upon and no assets to liquidate other than the land it stood on. It was clear that the diocese were unable to support them, further than seed funding. There were no longer major funding streams that would pay for the restoration or replacement of churches. The only assets East Ham could draw upon were their own buildings and the wit of their leadership. Yet, within a relatively short period of time they were able to raise the considerable sum of over one million pounds.

²⁰⁷ David Owen, *English Philanthropy 1660-1960* (Massachusetts: The Belknap Press, 1964), p. 532.

²⁰⁸ Owen, *English Philanthropy 1660-1960*, p. 555.

²⁰⁹ Rodney Lowe, *The Welfare State in Britain Since 1945* (London: Macmillan Press, 1993), p. 3.

²¹⁰ Purdy, 'The Urban Experience', p. 357.

Networking became an important skill in gaining funding as Lowe negotiated with colleagues and neighbours over whom to approach. There were complex interrelationships that influenced the funding of the scheme. The Bishop of Barking was to meet with the Bishop of Chelmsford who was on Aston Charities Board to ask them for support for the project.²¹¹ The Diocesan Bishop was asked if he could help with the fundraising by an appeal to all the churches in the diocese.²¹² Lowe was in contact with colleagues at Birmingham Voluntary Service, trusts he had been successful with like the Cadbury Trust and even contacted the parish patrons, Brasenose College.²¹³ Lowe could draw upon some significant support. The former Archdeacon of Southend and now Bishop of St Alban's, John Taylor, wrote to him saying, 'I have blazoned the story of your achievements all round the City of London.'²¹⁴

Fundraising became more complex with increases in costs and reduction in sources of revenue. This was a period of spiralling inflation and its effect on the project was a constant concern.²¹⁵ In December 1979 the bill for the project was estimated to be £240,000.²¹⁶ By November 1980 the cost of the church side of the project had risen from £200,000 to £300,000 and there was a £90,000 shortfall.²¹⁷ It was estimated that inflation in the building industry was running at over twenty percent in June 1980.²¹⁸ Writing in March of that year Paul Braby, the Quantity Surveyor, said to Lowe, '...it is extremely difficult with the volatile state of the economy to accurately forecast cost over the next three years...' ²¹⁹

²¹¹ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Adams to Lowe, 16 October 1978.

²¹² London, SBCA, Letters, Lowe to Trillo, 19 January 1981.

²¹³ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to Woolridge, 25 April 1979. Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to Cadbury's, 4 May 1979. Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to Baggerley, 19 June 1979.

²¹⁴ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Taylor to Lowe, 8 June 1982.

²¹⁵ London, SBCA, Minutes of St Bartholomew's Redevelopment Committee, (undated c1980).

²¹⁶ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to Till of Barings, 12 December 1979.

²¹⁷ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to Till of Barings, 12 November 1980.

²¹⁸ London, SBCA, Minutes of DBF Sub-Committee, 4 June 1980.

²¹⁹ London, SBCA, Letters, Braby to Lowe, 17 March 1980.

Inflation also could also affect the grant making trusts. The Lang Foundation was having problems with inflation in late 1980.²²⁰ Lowe asked the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) if they could send their funding earlier so that St Bartholomew's could maximise the interest and minimise the effects of inflation.²²¹ He was forced to write to funders to see if they would increase their grants to keep up with the costs.²²² In June 1981 there was now a shortfall of £70,000 for the church side of the project.²²³

There were also problems of receiving funding from different partners. Purdy wrote to Springboard in May 1978, who he felt should be contributing to the professional fees, requesting that Springboard would pay their share.²²⁴ Springboard was unwilling to contribute anything to the costs until the contracts were completed and tenders received. This was difficult for a project that was already paying professional fees upfront. Yet Springboard felt that, 'The foregoing procedure, I am sure you will find is normal for this form of packaging deal arrangement...' ²²⁵

St Bartholomew's was in competition with other projects for funds, some of which like the Mayflower were quite close to home.²²⁶ Martin Wallace, Vicar of St Mark's, Forest Gate, regretted that he could not support St Bartholomew's because they had to raise £5,000 a year towards their own church.²²⁷ Lowe was also seeking funds for the community groups in his care. In 1982 he obtained a grant of £6,000 for the Asian Language project based in Fellowship House from The Monuments Trust.²²⁸

Another issue that the project faced was the relatively slow way in which funds came into pay for work. Even when funds came from partners supporting the project there were

²²⁰ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to Lang Foundation, 27 October 1980.

²²¹ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to Watson, 27 October 1980.

²²² Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Barings Foundation to Lowe, 1 April 1980. Aston Charities to Lowe, 8 April 1980. Hayward Foundation to Lowe, 22 April 1980.

²²³ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to The Tudor Trust, 22 June 1981.

²²⁴ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Purdy to Braby, 24 May 1978.

²²⁵ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Braby to Lowe, 9 October 1978.

²²⁶ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Barings to Lowe, 17 December 1979. The work of the Mayflower is explored in detail in Chapter Two.

²²⁷ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Wallace to Lowe, 7 April 1981.

²²⁸ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to Monuments Trust, 12 July 1982.

delays. The council were only willing to pay towards the building in instalments and these were not always on time.²²⁹ Chelmsford Diocese was frustrated with the slow payments from Newham.²³⁰ Lowe was required to ask the council for late payments for architect's fees on the 8 November 1978 at a point at which church funds were all but exhausted.²³¹ This was still not rectified by the twenty-fourth when he wrote again.²³² He had to write yet again in January 1979.²³³ The council were not the only ones who were tardy in paying and Lowe had to write to Chelmsford Diocesan Pastoral Committee in November 1978.²³⁴ There were problems yet again with the DBF and Lowe had to write to them in June 1979.²³⁵ Barings wrote to Lowe in December 1979 apologising for the delay in bringing the project to their board. This was due to the fact that it had taken three months for Newham Social Services to reply to them as a referee.²³⁶ Lowe had asked Newham Social Services to do this in July of 1979.²³⁷ There was even frustration that the Church Commissioners seemed to have delayed the process.²³⁸

Support for raising funds was hardly sophisticated at this time and the only advice that Lowe seemed to have been able to draw upon was two sides of an A4 sheet published by the Voluntary Organizations Information and Communications Exchange.²³⁹ He had to adapt his approach to attract the interest of different funding agencies to meet their individual concerns. In doing so he could present the strengths of both church and community sides of the development. He had to develop his own strategies for funding. This required a high level of skill at shaping each grant application. When he contacted the Gulbenkian Foundation he stressed the community nature of the project and its multi-

²²⁹ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Lowe to Council 15 January 1979 and Hawkes and Braby to Mears, 14 February 1979.

²³⁰ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Chelmsford Diocese to Lowe, 22 November 1978.

²³¹ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Lowe to Jones of LBN, 8 November 1978.

²³² Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Lowe to Jones of LBN, 24 November 1978.

²³³ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Lowe to LBN, 15 January 1979.

²³⁴ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Lowe to Williams of Chelmsford Diocesan Pastoral Committee, 24 November 1978.

²³⁵ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Lowe to Cartwright, 4 June 1979.

²³⁶ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Barings to Lowe, 17 December 1979.

²³⁷ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to Boyce Director of Newham Social Services, 9 July 1979.

²³⁸ London, SBCA, Minutes of DBF Sub-Committee, 14 November 1979.

²³⁹ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Voice Fact Sheet 1, Voluntary Organizations Information and Communications Exchange.

racial and multi-cultural context.²⁴⁰ When he wrote to the Norwood Trust he described how, ‘...the Parish of East Ham have been considering over the last four years how it can make a more valued and real evangelistic outreach to this deprived inner-city area...’²⁴¹ In a similar application to Goldsmiths, and Cyril Klienworth he made no mention of evangelism.²⁴² He was also pragmatic about funders and approached organizations like Ladbrokes which other churches may have baulked at.²⁴³ Some funders seemed to need persuading their money was not just going to benefit Christians. The City Parochial Fund could not support the project despite its community nature because of the Church.²⁴⁴ Lowe wrote to the manager of Barclay’s Bank in East Ham saying this project is, ‘...totally community-orientated and contains a whole range of different groups from the AA to Marriage Guidance and is not traditionally denominational.’²⁴⁵

Although the large charities and grant awarding bodies gave the bulk of the funding, there was a great deal of local activity as well.²⁴⁶ There were a variety of methods of raising funds from the congregation, one such was the sale of ‘nail pens’ souvenirs and Lowe ordered £160.50 of them in February 1981.²⁴⁷ Others included a ‘buy a brick campaign’, an additional Summer Fair, jumble sales, coffee mornings, ‘cook your favourite meal’ evenings, dinner and dances, a St Bartholomew’s Christmas card, coin jars, and an Indian food day from the Asian Women’s project.²⁴⁸ Local churches gave small gifts.²⁴⁹ Donations came from as far a field as Brussels from past associates of the

²⁴⁰ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to the Gulbenkian Foundation, 15 June 1979.

²⁴¹ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to Clark of Norwood Settlement, 15 June 1979.

²⁴² Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to Cyril Klienworth and Goldsmith Company, 15 June 1979.

²⁴³ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Ladbrokes to Lowe, 9 April 1981.

²⁴⁴ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to Till of Barings, 15 June 1979.

²⁴⁵ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to Barclays Bank East Ham, 7 September 1979.

²⁴⁶ Donations came from the Mercers Company, the Stewards Company, St Alban’s church, East Wood PCC, I R Marks Charitable Trust, Tate and Lyle, Hawkins Church Trust, a parish coffee morning, and an Asian Ladies coffee morning. Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 4, Parish Newsletter, 9 August 1981.

²⁴⁷ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to Westfield Advertising, 4 February 1981.

²⁴⁸ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Memo for Fundraising for St Bart’s, October 1980.

²⁴⁹ The Plaistow United Reformed Church donated £50. Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Plaistow URC to Lowe, 9 April 1981. The Rector of St Michael’s, Manor Park, gave £10. London, SBCA, Acknowledgement, John Whitwell, undated c.1980s. Later he was to employ APEC for the redevelopment of the church in Manor Park. The Team Ministry played a part in supporting St Bartholomew’s. St Alban’s church raised £131.20 from a dance. Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to Miss Gladstone, 24 February 1982. Former clergy of the parish gave money. A past curate of St Mary Magdalene’s, Sir James Roll, a member of the family which founded the Rolls Royce motor company gave £50. London,

parish.²⁵⁰ There were even individual items of equipment exclusively paid for by people such as the altar.²⁵¹

An important fundraising project was the shop the church took over in the High Street. This was first advertised in the parish newsletter in March 1982.²⁵² The rent was very favourably priced at only ten pound a week.²⁵³ Initially it was raising considerable sums towards the furnishing fund, £330 in its first week, £300 in the next.²⁵⁴ Quality was a concern and there was an appeal for good items to sell.²⁵⁵ However, by August the need for more volunteers was in the words of the Newsletter ‘getting critical’.²⁵⁶ By October 1982 they had to hold a grand sale at greatly reduced prices.²⁵⁷

All means of raising funds were explored including the rental of advertising space on hoardings temporarily erected around the demolition site and it was hoped this would bring in between £750 and £1,800 per year.²⁵⁸ It was even hoped that the church could make some money on the sale of the old bricks from the site but the walls of the church had been cavity lined with concrete and in the end the church had to reimburse the

SBCA, Acknowledgement, James Roll, undated c. 1980s. Revd Sir James William Cecil Roll, Baronet. Roll was curate of St Mary’s, East Ham from 1944 to 1958. His obituary described him as a “kindly, humble, self-effacing pastor.” Trevor Beeson, (Compiler) *Priests and Prelate: The Daily Telegraph Clerical Obituaries*, (London: Continuum, 2002), p. 178. In a similar vein Sidney Goose ministered at St Luke’s, Canning Town from 1933 to 1977. He received an effusive epitaph in the *Newham Recorder* which was not abashed to describe him as a saint. *Newham Recorder*, 10 April 1980, p. 3. The impression in both men’s obituaries was that their priestly ministries reflected values and an attitude from a bygone era. The previous Rector of East Ham Tozer gave a donation. Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to Tozer, 27 March 1981. £25 was given by a secretary to the Bank of England. London, SBCA, Letters, Gough to Lowe, 3 April 1981. He received small donations from the Mayor of Newham’s benevolent fund in April 1981. Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, St Bartholomew’s Redevelopment Appeal, January to April 1981.

²⁵⁰ London, SBCA, Letters, Aperedarle? to Lowe, 3 July 1981.

²⁵¹ London, SBCA, Letters, Hopkins to Lowe, 12 January 1983.

²⁵² Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 4, Parish Newsletter, 7 March 1982.

²⁵³ London, SBCA, Minutes of St Bartholomew’s Redevelopment Sub-Committee, 17 March 1982.

²⁵⁴ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 4, Parish Newsletter, 25 July 1982 and the Ninth Sunday after Pentecost 1982.

²⁵⁵ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 4, Parish Newsletter, 20 June 1982.

²⁵⁶ Chelmsford, ECRO A11221. Box 4, Parish Newsletter, 15 August 1982.

²⁵⁷ Chelmsford, ECRO A11221. Box 4, Parish Newsletter, 31 October 1982.

²⁵⁸ Chelmsford, ECRO A11221. Box 2, Letters, Mike Jackson to Lowe, 28 January 1981.

demolition team for lost income.²⁵⁹ Taking up the offer of using the church site as a venue for a fun fair was felt to be a step too far though.²⁶⁰

Lowe explored gaining support for the project not just in money but also in donations in kind. A deal was struck with Olivetti to loan the project a state-of-the-art computer.²⁶¹ He approached local industry that still survived in East Ham at the time. Gregton Confectioners Company was approached for donations of their products to sell at the parish fair.²⁶² Trebor's, based in the parish at Katherine Road, had already agreed to do so.²⁶³ Lowe approached organizations like National Westminster to see if they could offer administrative help for the project and he contacted the Post Office with the aim of receiving concessionary rates on postage.²⁶⁴

There was sensitivity to the issue of money. The church was not in the business of exploiting its users.²⁶⁵ Yet there was recognition that the new development would provide a steady income for the parish. An early report justifies the redevelopment of the site because it would mean greater revenue for the church.²⁶⁶ Agreements for the use of the building were very advantageous for the church. The borough had exclusive access to the space it was funding during the day, but St Bartholomew's could rent out the space in the evenings and at weekends, thus potentially expanding its income.²⁶⁷

The end of the decade was to see a growing industry in supporting voluntary sector funding, as governments encouraged local initiatives.²⁶⁸ The Church could draw on significant contacts and trust in grant awarding bodies. The creation of the Church Urban

²⁵⁹ London, SBCA, Letters, Lowe to Dipper, 2 February 1981.

²⁶⁰ London, SBCA, Linda Steward, A Summary of Minutes and Decisions taken by St Bartholomew's Re-development Sub-Committee, 23 January 1981.

²⁶¹ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Olivetti to Lowe, 11 February 1981.

²⁶² Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to Gregton Confections Company, 9 June 1982.

²⁶³ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Treebores to Lowe, 1 June 1982.

²⁶⁴ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Lowe to National Westminster, 22 September 1982. Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Owen to Lowe, 18 March 1981.

²⁶⁵ Purdy, 'The Urban Experience', p. 428.

²⁶⁶ London, SBCA, Gordon Owen, St Bartholomew's Church Report for the Parochial Church Council Meeting, to be held on 13th June 1977.

²⁶⁷ Purdy, 'New Life for an Urban Parish', p. 21.

²⁶⁸ Lowe, *The Welfare State in Britain Since 1945*, p. 276.

Fund just at the end of the St Bartholomew's project contributed to a sense that the Church needed to become more professional in its approach to raise funds for such endeavours. Yet the Church was still in a privileged position to draw on significant financial support for schemes in Newham. There is clear evidence this was beginning to become a competitive market. A new specialist approach to funding was needed that was more nuanced, but Lowe seemed as capable of working in this changing environment as he was of seeking imaginative solutions to old problems of administration and technology. Further church developments would have to continue to find fresh funding streams.

Partners

One of the unique features of this project was the willingness of the Church to develop partners to achieve their goals. Lowe admitted that there was a need to develop a number of partnerships that would safeguard the overall project in the event one group would pull out (as the local authority did twenty years later). By the 1970s there was no indication from the Council that the Church was perceived to be an outmoded agency that could be readily marginalized. The Church in Newham was, for some, a valued asset in responding to dire need. Secular agencies were willing to collaborate with it where common goals were evident.²⁶⁹ This was a far cry from the early days of the welfare state, when charities feared collapse in the face of an all controlling public sector. St Bartholomew's reflected a new era for community partnership between the state sector and the Church. There were three principal agencies that worked alongside Lowe and his congregation, the London Borough of Newham, Springboard Housing and the doctors' surgery.

Significantly, there were not the ideological struggles that beset other Labour controlled authorities. Lowe does remember some influence of the Militant Tendency, but the Church was not seen as an enemy, but an ally as long as its motivation for community engagement was not proselytizing. The Church was viewed as one of the largest voluntary sector groups in the borough with a respected pedigree, thanks to the social engagement of the settlements. This meant Anglicans were trusted by the council. The

²⁶⁹ Lowe, *The Welfare State in Britain Since 1945*, p 275.

London Borough of Newham, through Jack Hart, a local Labour councillor and the then mayor, was seen by Lowe as particularly crucial in the development and support of the project.²⁷⁰ It was the London Borough of Newham that actually expressed an interest in becoming a partner in the development.²⁷¹ On the 29 September 1977 there was a key meeting between Lowe, Purdy, Jack Hart, Jimmy Froud of Aston Charities and Ken Boyce from Newham Social Services.²⁷² This was to discuss the possibility of part funding a project that would provide space for social services and a health component. By November 1977 it was settled at the DCC that the only course of action was the demolition of the old building and the commissioning of a brand new church and centre.²⁷³ The partnership that Lowe initiated with the borough came at an opportune moment for both. The International Monetary Fund crisis of 1976 effectively terminated any further ambitious public funding schemes.²⁷⁴ Newham froze its council building programme in January 1977 after the autumn budget of 1976.²⁷⁵ Two of the biggest assets that St Bartholomew's could still draw on was its land and access to alternative revenue streams the public sector could not draw on. By sharing the St Bartholomew's project the Council also could benefit at a time when finances were very limited. The *Newham Recorder* reported that the leader of the council, Jack Hart, said, 'We are jolly lucky that those who own the land are prepared to use it in this way.'²⁷⁶

There was a further sea change in housing culture in the United Kingdom at the time. Council housing was making way for the owner occupier and those who could not afford to buy, particularly the very old, were slipping through the crack of provision. There would be a significant steer from publicly funded housing projects to private partnerships

²⁷⁰ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

²⁷¹ Purdy, 'New Life for an Urban Parish', p. 20.

²⁷² A fuller description of the work of Jimmy Froud and Aston Charities is found in Chapter Two.

²⁷³ London, SBCA, Minutes of St Bartholomew's DCC, 22 November 1977.

²⁷⁴ Jerry White, *London in the Twentieth-century: A City and Its People* (London: Penguin 2002), p. 77.

²⁷⁵ *Newham Recorder*, 6 January 1977, p. 8.

²⁷⁶ *Newham Recorder*, 29 December 1977, p. 38. With a growing number of different denominations moving into the borough and new faiths there was actually a set of council guidelines for communities that wanted to build a new place of worship. This was after a cross departmental report on new communities needs was produced in 1977. *Newham Recorder*, 30 June 1977, p. 8. The document was drawn up in 1978 at a point when there was a growing need for worship space for new faith groups that were making a home in the borough. London, SBCA, K. Lund, Report, A Place of Worship, Department of Architecture and Planning, November 1978.

with the growth of Housing Associations. Springboard Housing Association itself had been established as a joint venture between Chelmsford Diocese and the Methodist Church, Edward Finch, a Canon of Chelmsford cathedral being one of its creators.²⁷⁷ By 1983 it was managing 2,000 homes throughout East London and Essex and it specialised in working with the elderly and the mentally ill.²⁷⁸ The St Bartholomew's project was developed at an auspicious moment when such bodies were looking for partners. If however, it was expected that Springboard would unduly favour the Church, this was sadly to prove illusory. Some of the hardest struggles Lowe faced were with the management board of the Housing Association.

Private agencies like Springboard were not awash with cash and entered into hard bargaining with St Bartholomew's. To keep the total cost of the project to a minimum it was hoped that the housing would be as economical as possible.²⁷⁹ Springboard expected a specific number of flats to be built on the site, and the plans for the housing had to be revised to accommodate twenty-eight to thirty flats to make the project viable for them. The St Bartholomew's side of the project also had to make compromises. Purdy felt the additional flats would mean going to four floors, which he though would be too high.²⁸⁰ If Springboard were to remain on board they had to be accommodated and the amendments were agreed and written into the design by December 1978.²⁸¹ Indeed there were further revisions of plans to include more double bedrooms for couples.²⁸² The Church was facing a new culture where they were no longer the dominant players who could control events. They had to learn that their wishes might have to take second place to much-needed expertise and revenue. However, these fresh opportunities for collaboration meant figures like Stephen Lowe could have a voice in shaping public

²⁷⁷ Chris Harris, 'The Family in Post-war Britain', in *Understanding Post-war British Society* ed. by James Obelkevich, (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 45-57, p. 47 notes the significant problem of housing after the war.

²⁷⁸ London, SBCA, Guide to St Bartholomew's Church and Centre, c. 1983. p. 7.

²⁷⁹ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Lowe to Purdy, 1 November 1978.

²⁸⁰ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Purdy to Start of Springboard, 25 October 1978.

²⁸¹ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Hawkes and Braby to Start of Springboard, 29 December 1978.

²⁸² Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Minutes of St Bartholomew's Redevelopment Committee, 23 November 1978.

policy. As uncomfortable as the Church might be with compromise, its changing role in Newham offered fresh outlet for service.

The final partner in the project was the local Health Authority. This project was developed at the beginning of the new Conservative Government and at a transition stage in its understanding of welfare provision. Reform of the National Health Service did not begin in earnest until 1987.²⁸³ R. Baggott suggested the Conservatives did not feel confident in criticising this pillar of the welfare state at this time.²⁸⁴ Money was still relatively plentiful for this type of project, this at a time when the Government was actively expounding the rhetoric of partnerships with the voluntary sector.²⁸⁵ The National Health Service was going through a reappraisal in the late 1970s, not least because there was evidence that improvement to public health in London seemed to have faltered.²⁸⁶ There was a sense that power should shift from the health professionals to the patients and a more holistic approach had to be developed.²⁸⁷ This meant that the St Bartholomew's development came at a strategic time in rethinking health care.

Lowe was very interested in enticing a health component onto the site, particularly when there was a suggestion that the Health Authority could bring £200,000 to the project.²⁸⁸ He contacted C. Cooper, the Administrator of Newham Health District, in June 1978 to see if there was any interest in building a health centre on part of St Bartholomew's site.²⁸⁹ At a meeting with the Community Physicians a very ambitious plan was outlined for a health centre that would include chiropody, an ophthalmic suite, maternity and Family Planning Association clinic, physiotherapy and teaching rooms.²⁹⁰ The proposed health centre would have a ninety-nine year lease at a peppercorn rent for the doctors if

²⁸³ Geoffrey Rivett, *From Cradle to Grave. Fifty Years of the NHS* (London: Ling's Fund, 1998), p. 361.

²⁸⁴ Rob Baggott, *Health and Health Care in Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 100.

²⁸⁵ Rudolf Klein, *The New Politics of the NHS* (London: Longman, 1995), p. 124.

²⁸⁶ White, *London in the Twentieth-century*, p. 234.

²⁸⁷ Rivett, *From Cradle to Grave*, p. 295.

²⁸⁸ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Lowe to Braby, 24 April 1978.

²⁸⁹ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Lowe to Cooper of Newham Health District, 9 June 1978.

²⁹⁰ London, SBCA, St Bart's Re-Development Report to the Parochial Church Council, 18 October 1977.

they found the funding for their part of the building. If this was not possible Lowe suggested a basic doctors' surgery.²⁹¹

John Jones from Newham Social Services felt there were no funds available for a health centre so wrote to Purdy saying the project had to proceed without this.²⁹² Lowe was unperturbed and wrote to Nigel Spearing, his local MP, for support in bringing a GP's surgery into the project instead. The practice that he was interested in bringing in was using the council's annexe as a surgery, which Lowe felt was very inadequate. It was also costing the doctors a considerable sum in rent a year. The council itself was in desperate need of accommodation according to Lowe so the proposal was potentially beneficial to all parties. Although the doctors were interested in the project, progress had stalled because the scheme was untested and unfamiliar. There were concerns over how the buildings would be managed and the Health Authority was uncomfortable about putting money into a voluntary sector project.²⁹³ At a meeting of the City and East London Area Health Authority held on the 18 December 1978 they decided to fund the doctors' part of the St Bartholomew's project through an annual rent.²⁹⁴ Lowe formally wrote to the doctors on the 8 January 1979 to confirm that they would become part of the scheme.²⁹⁵ On the 22 January 1979 the doctors agreed that they would move into the new development.²⁹⁶ They would have a twenty-one year lease on their part of the building.²⁹⁷ A loan from Chelmsford DBF paid for it. This would be reimbursed over twenty-one years when the lease would revert back to St Bartholomew's Church.²⁹⁸

There are two alternative ways of looking at the St Bartholomew's project. The first is the story of continuing decline and failure on the part of the Church predicted by Towler and Coxon.²⁹⁹ Where once the Church led the way in social provision in areas like Newham

²⁹¹ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Lowe to District Health Authority, 12 July 1978.

²⁹² Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Jones to Purdy, 13 July 1978.

²⁹³ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Lowe to Spearing, 17 July 1978.

²⁹⁴ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Chief Executive of LBN to Lowe, 3 January 1979.

²⁹⁵ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Lowe to Brill of Doctors, 8 January 1979.

²⁹⁶ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Doctors to Lowe, 22 January 1979.

²⁹⁷ London, SBCA, Minutes of DBF Sub-Committee, 4 June 1980.

²⁹⁸ London, SBCA, Minutes of DBF Sub-Committee, 4 June 1980.

²⁹⁹ Towler and Coxon, *The Fate of the Anglican Clergy*, p. 202.

its role, thanks to the welfare state, like that of the settlements before it, was severely limited.³⁰⁰ However, an alternative reading suggests this is to fail to recognize that the welfare state in the 1970s and 1980s was itself now under significant strain. The Church in Newham had a much-needed resource in land and voluntary leadership. Lowe was able to pioneer a new approach to care provision that worked collaboratively with the statutory sector at a time when the statutory sector was encouraged to financially support the voluntary sector.³⁰¹ A partnership was formed to tackle the old evils of substandard housing, health problems, and a church was reinvigorated to stand alongside such partners as valued colleagues. The Church may no longer be in a position to deliver parish wide services as it had attempted in the past, but now congregations like St Bartholomew's were willing to support partnerships who could.

Conclusion

The St Bartholomew's project tells more than simply a story about survival. It exemplifies the changing role of clergy and laity in the Church of England during what have been considered the most challenging decades of the twentieth-century. There is, however, ample evidence that Anglicans in East Ham were ready to respond to this challenge and still draw in considerable energy and resources to achieve their goals. A unique theology was to find expression in the building of a new church that defied claims of decline and irresistible secularization. The Bartholomew's project could simply have been an imaginative project, executed by the local community with little or no impact on the wider Church. It was however, the springboard into a flurry of developments throughout the deanery and beyond that gives this approach to urban ministry at this particular time such significance in terms of changing role and response to secularization. A not insignificant fact was that this approach was to cross over the seemingly impermeable boundaries of Anglican theological tradition. Already before St Bartholomew's was formally opened the Evangelical minister at St Mark's, Forest Gate,

³⁰⁰ F. K. Prochaska, *Christianity and Social Service in Modern Britain: the Disinherited Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 153.

³⁰¹ Maria Brenton, 'The Voluntary Sector in British Social Services', in *Social Policy in Modern Britain* ed. by J. O. Campling (Harlow: Longmans, 1985), p. 43.

the Revd Martin Wallace, was in contact with Martin Purdy with a view to accomplishing in Forest Gate what had been achieved in East Ham.

The 1970s were a pivotal moment in the life of Anglican churches in Newham. The St Bartholomew's initiative paved the way for a series of developments that seemed to answer the question of the future of the inner-city church. It certainly gave it a theological justification. The next chapter will look at three examples of Anglican churches from different traditions, missiologies and social contexts in the borough. They were not the only churches to redevelop but form a useful collection of case studies. They drew inspiration from St Bartholomew's and developed their community projects using the same architects. In doing so it will be possible to chart the development of Anglican praxis and approach in the 1980s and 90s, in the decades post Thatcher and the *Faith in the City* report, and how successfully this model could be adapted to other contexts.

Chapter Four:

Developing community: three case studies

Introduction

The period between the opening of St Bartholomew's Church, East Ham and St Mark's Church, Beckton, 1983 to 1991, was to witness intense activity in the borough as churches remodelled their plant in an attempt to rectify the dilemma of buildings. Even before St Bartholomew's was completed, plans for replacing further churches in Newham were taking shape. Martin Purdy was in contact with Martin Wallace, the Vicar of St Mark's, Forest Gate, to rejuvenate their site as early as July 1983.¹ In 1985 thirteen churches in the borough were earmarked for adaptation or even closure.² This could be seen as quite a revolutionary step. As Giles has pointed out, much of the history of churches has been one of stagnation and inability to respond to a shifting context.³ However, at a point when resources and influence were supposedly waning this reflected a changing attitude to the Church of England at a diocesan, deanery and parish level. These future redevelopments were guided by pervading philosophies of the time, the issues and opportunities that presented themselves and the available resource at these churches disposal. They were shaped by the worldly discourse of the country but, far from being passive receptors of secularization, they sought to respond to this changing context with energy and imagination.

Out of these thirteen, three examples have been chosen to examine in more detail. The first two are St Mark's, Forest Gate, a traditionally Evangelical parish on the northern border of the borough, St Michael's, Little Ilford, a parish in the Liberal Catholic tradition in Manor Park also known as the Froud Centre, on the north east edge of

¹ London, SBCA, Letters, Purdy to Wallace, 21 July 1983.

² London, SMLICA, Report of Director of Planning and Architecture, Planning and Redevelopment Committee, 17 June 1985.

³ Richard Giles, *Re-pitching the Tent: The Definitive Guide to Reordering your Church* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2004), p. 6.

Newham.⁴ The final parish was the brand new St Mark's, Tollgate Road, a local ecumenical project, created in the burgeoning community of Beckton, in the south.

These three churches have been chosen to exhibit the diversity of schemes that were developed in Newham by Anglicans at the time. They denoted something of the breadth of Anglican ecclesiology in the borough and indicate the power of both old established community groups such as Aston Charities and the new money of the London Docklands Development Corporation that churches could attract. There was evidence that Christians could still be enticed to respond to contemporary challenges with enthusiasm.⁵ They attracted vast sums of money to finance them and found new ways of remaining community leaders at a point when many would have written them off as powerless and irrelevant.

All were designed by the firm responsible for East Ham, the Architects, Planners, and Ecclesiastical Consultants, based in Birmingham and all were created, to some extent, in the wake of the St Bartholomew's development. For John Whitwell, St Bartholomew's was the catalyst that enabled St Michael's to think about its own potential.⁶ Stephen Lowe attended early PCC meetings at St Michael's and offered support and advice to John Whitwell.⁷ Forest Gate people visited the new centre in East Ham to see what they could achieve at St Mark's on a smaller scale.⁸ Martin Wallace felt that Stephen Lowe was a real inspiration to him and St Mark's people visited St Bartholomew's to see what had been achieved there. St Mark's, Beckton, actually grew out of the East Ham Team when St Bartholomew's was just developing.⁹

Far from retreating in the face of the supposed strength of secularization, churches in Newham became reinvigorated to respond afresh to the perceived urban crisis that was

⁴ It was also responsible for a small Norman church dedicated to St Mary the Virgin. Rather confusingly the official title of the parish is Little Ilford although this is in an area known now as Manor Park.

⁵ Laurie Green, *Power to the Powerless: Theology Brought to Life* (London: Marshal Pickering, 1987), p. 1.

⁶ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

⁷ London, SMLICA, Minutes St Michael's PCC, 13 March 1984.

⁸ Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

⁹ Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

developing in the country at the time.¹⁰ *Faith in the City* had been produced in the wake of the publication of the *Scarman Report* initiated after widespread rioting in inner-city areas.¹¹ Unlike the East Ham development these churches were responding to fresh challenges and opportunities that were to emerge in the mid-to-late 1980s. The two most significant were the increasingly pluralistic nature of Newham as a borough and the publication of *Faith in the City* in 1985. St Mark's and St Michael's both predate *Faith in the City* and could be said to have been empowered by it rather than been a product of it. St Mark's, Beckton, was created in the wake of *Faith in the City*. All these centres owe a debt of gratitude to the timing of the report that enabled both the local church and diocese to see the developments speedily through. They offer a singular insight into how one particular aspect of Britain was affected by and responded to what was perhaps the most remarkable Church report of the last half of the century. A story emerges of how, through *Faith in the City*, a whole diocese focused its attention on one small segment of the Barking Episcopal area, albeit for a brief period.

The churches had varying levels of responsibility and influence in these buildings. The St Mark's Centre was a church that remained tightly in the control of the congregation of Forest Gate. The St Michael's and St Mark's, Beckton, were designed as partnerships. St Michael's site was in shared ownership with Aston Charities, a long established body based in Newham.¹² St Mark's, Beckton, was an ecumenical project that received substantial funding from the London Docklands Development Corporation to create a community centre component to the plant.

These projects form an important milestone in the story of Anglican Christianity in Newham dating back to those precursors in the 1940s and 50s, the settlements, missions and charities that sought to fuse a Christian faith with service to the local community. They were to become the dominant model of urban church renewal in Chelmsford

¹⁰ Paul Harrison, *Inside the Inner-City: Life under the Cutting Edge* (London: Penguin, revised 1983), p. 21.

¹¹ Lord Scarman (Chair) *The Brixton Disorders 10-12 April 1981: The Scarman Report: Report of an Inquiry by the Right Honourable the Lord Scarman, OBE Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for the Home Department by command of her Majesty November 1981* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1982).

¹² Their part of the development was to be named the Froud Centre, named after Revd Jimmy Froud the head of the charity.

Diocese for the next thirty years. In turn, their influence spread to shape the suburban church's mission.

The records of the respective churches vary greatly from almost complete runs of PCC minutes and news sheet articles, through to little local archives but with a wealth of diocesan correspondence and documentation of various kinds. Where there are gaps, the oral histories of key people involved in the redevelopments supplement and compliment the written material, as do the articles of local newspapers.¹³ The inner-city of the early 1980s was felt by some clergy to be in terminal decline, and one stark example of this decline was the problems of managing church buildings. We turn now to how these three churches responded to this challenge.

¹³ As well as eye witnesses it will be possible to look at the impact that national figures had on Newham because of their close associations with the Deanery and Diocese. Newham itself was to have strong ties with key national figures in the church at the time including Laurie Green, brought up in Manor Park and later Vicar of Poplar and then Bishop of Bradwell. Eric James grew up in neighbouring Dagenham and visited Newham on a number of occasions. David Sheppard, who was now Bishop of Liverpool, had been the warden of the Mayflower Centre in the 1960s. Wesley Carr who eventually became Dean of Westminster Abbey was a close friend and supporter of Stephen Lowe and in the 1980s was a Residentiary Canon of Chelmsford Cathedral.

St Mark's, Forest Gate

St Mark's, Forest Gate, is a parish on the northern edge of the Deanery of Newham (Map 4.1).



Map 4. 1. The boundary of the parish of St Mark's, Forest Gate.

Source: Chelmsford Diocesan Office.

This parish is bounded on the north by a large expanse of land known as Wanstead Flats and is part of the Deanery of Redbridge. To the east is the larger parish of All Saints, Forest Gate. Its southern board is the parish of Emmanuel, Forest Gate. To the west is the parish of St Saviour's, Forest Gate.

It is bounded by a strip of green space called Wanstead Flats and its southern border is the Romford Road, one of the principal arteries into the city. It is almost entirely a residential area with a few shops at the western end, clustered around Forest Gate Station. Although it had always been an area of some deprivation it was also one of the few conservation zones in the borough and in the past decade had experienced gentrification. This was thanks largely to a collection of imposing, for Newham, double fronted houses. It has become a multi-cultural part of the borough with a strong Asian population. St Mark's is firmly on the Evangelical wing of the Church of England. The origins of the church lay in a cowshed that was donated by a local farmer in the late nineteenth century to be used as a mission chapel by the Church of England. The first service was held there

on 15 May 1886.¹⁴ This was replaced by a more permanent structure in 1893 that, gradually was added to when necessity and funding became available, with little regard to an overall plan or impact on its existing buildings (Fig 4.1).¹⁵

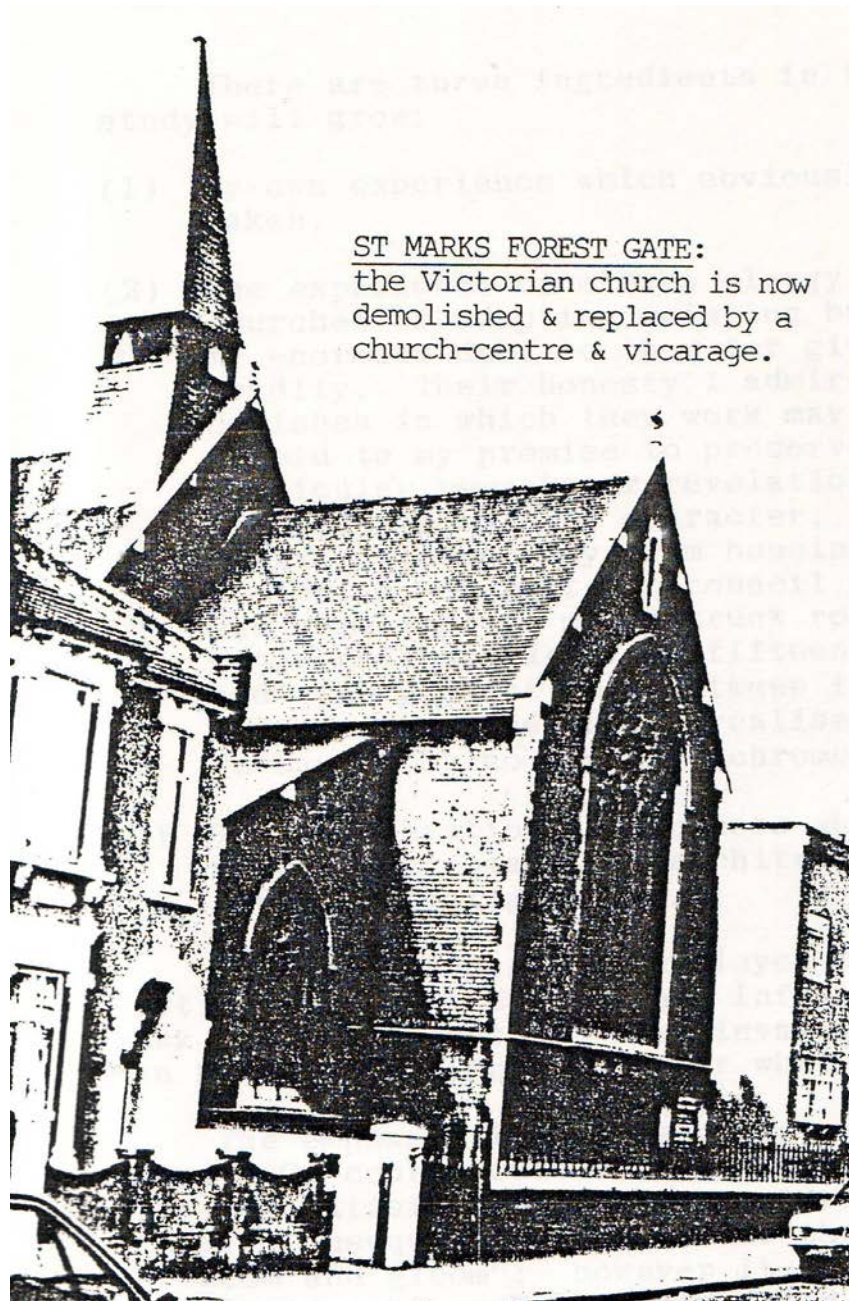


Figure 4.1 The old St Mark's, Forest Gate.

The author's collection.

¹⁴ London, SMFGCA, The Story of St Mark's 1886-1966: These Fifty Years, p. 5 and p. 7.

¹⁵ London, SMFGCA, Welcome to St Mark's Forest Gate, A parish leaflet, 1987, p. 2.

It was this structure that was to become a source of great concern to the priest and people of the parish by the 1980s.

Writing in 1977 Eddie Gibbs indicated how time consuming and exhausting the repair of buildings was.¹⁶ Newham faced a crisis in its church-plants and a report from Barking Episcopal area in 1985 noted how many churches were ‘burned up’ by internal problems. The Church in East London was at times more worried about maintenance than mission.¹⁷ It is significant that almost all the projects examined in this work were prompted by necessity. The principal cause for concern was the lack of funds inner-city churches had to repair their plant. St Mark’s, Forest Gate, was in a very similar predicament to the one St Bartholomew’s found itself in. St Mark’s, Forest Gate, was told it had to spend at least £150,000 on its building to make it safe from the elements.

Interestingly, St Mark’s is an example of how badly designed a Victorian church could be and how cheaply it was erected. It had been built piecemeal, each section clumsily stacked next to former buildings. This offered no uniform design, poor connections between different parts of the site and by the early 1980s was now physically pulling apart. The abiding memories of those who recall the old building were how poor a state it was in with a roof that leaked incessantly and a whole staff of volunteers coming in to empty buckets.¹⁸ The catalyst for change came, as it often did in such situations, with a crisis centred on the building. This was a crisis, in part due to the confluence of dilapidation of buildings, lack of funds and being given the stark choice of preservation or demolition.

Unlike St Bartholomew’s, St Mark’s faced a growing conservation lobby that complicated regeneration. There had been a considerable change in national attitudes to buildings. Authors such as Powell and De Le Hey were lamenting the demise of churches

¹⁶ Eddie Gibbs, *Urban Church Growth: Clues from South America and Britain* (Bramcote: Grove Booklets on Ministry and Worship, 55, 1977), p. 3.

¹⁷ London, Fox Archive, Church and Society in Essex and East London, p. 65.

¹⁸ Interview, Palmer, 29 July 2011.

in 1987.¹⁹ Certainly, Martin Purdy felt that none of these developments would have been approved by the end of the century and that their protection would have been strenuously called for.²⁰ This meant that these future developments needed to prove why restoration was not an option. First, it was discovered that the bell tower of St Mark's, Forest Gate, was in a state of collapse, but Forest Gate was in the singular position of being told it could not demolish the dilapidated bell tower because it was an integral feature of the Victorian church. Urgent action was required and then matters came to a head when an architect's report in 1981 indicated that the church's roof had reached the end of its life and had to be replaced.²¹ The only options were to completely re-roof the church or raze the church to the ground. Demolition was felt to be a more economical option.²² Seeking funding to preserve these buildings was not thought to be an option by those who used them. There was an added problem in that it was felt that English Heritage, the largest source of funding for such buildings, favoured sites that had a stylistic integrity to them. Few churches in Newham were of such a nature and quality. John Whitwell recalls how easy it was to get funding for the twelfth century gem of St Mary's, Little Ilford. Grants were rarely forthcoming for churches that were architecturally conventional.²³ The Church of England was not willing to preserve these buildings as time capsules. They were still very much working buildings, not historical relics and the Church felt they had an important function for mission. This was despite assumptions, by some, that their role had been reduced to not much more than folk museums.²⁴ The churches of Newham felt they had a real struggle on their hands to justify these developments to forces that seemed oblivious to their needs and limitations.

Maintaining old plant was burdensome and the possibility of a blank canvas persuasive justification for demolition. Just as significantly, it was becoming apparent that these

¹⁹ Ken Powell and Celia De La Hay, *Churches a Question of Conversion* (London: Save Britain's Heritage, 1987).

²⁰ Interview, Purdy, 6 April 2010.

²¹ London, SMFGCA, Martin Wallace, *Moving On*, p. 36.

²² Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

²³ *Living Faith in the City: A Progress report by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Advisory Group on Urban Priority Area* (London: General Synod of the Church of England, 1990), p. 57.

²⁴ St Mark's, Silvertown actually became a folk museum for a brief period in the early 1990s, it is now the venue for a Music Hall.

cavernous churches were expensive if not impossible to heat. There was a level of comfort that was expected to go hand in hand with church-going now. The nation was used to the luxury of central heating and churches felt obliged to provide rooms heated in the same way that domestic dwellings were. All those interviewed who were involved in their redevelopment remark on cold buildings. St Mark's, Forest Gate, had problems heating its building and this was now being noted by parishioners.²⁵ Cold rooms became a source of angst as churches tried every way to attract and keep adherents. After the redevelopment, St Mark's, Forest Gate, could claim that it was cheaper to run the new complex seven days a week than the old one on two days.²⁶ Again like St Bartholomew's, St Mark's had a seating capacity for seven hundred in the 1980s. This was at a stage when less than a hundred worshipped there.²⁷ There is strong evidence that St Mark's never had the congregation it was planned for. Indeed the *Daily News* survey of 1902 indicated its morning congregation was ninety-nine, suggesting that, by the late 1980s, its numbers at morning worship had actually grown.²⁸ A more adaptable and modest worship space would make worship intimate.

Fear of crime was to be an emerging concern for Newham residents from the 1980s. Like St Bartholomew's, St Mark's had security issues, but these were now focusing on the safety of people rather than vandalism to the building. Simon Law remembers the old St Mark's offered opportunities for unsavoury characters to loiter and was a source of unease to neighbours and congregation alike.²⁹ Disaffected youth and a growing drug culture meant unused buildings, like churches, became a locus for societal fears. There was a sense that nowhere was sacrosanct any more.

It was easy to see why rebuilding was favoured, given that repairing old buildings was costly in time and emotion as well as money. All these problems were felt to be solved by the simple expediency of starting afresh and building a new church. St Mark's, Forest

²⁵ Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

²⁶ London, Fox Archive, Martin Wallace, Barking Urban Mission Project, p. 64.

²⁷ Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

²⁸ Richard Mudie-Smith, Ed. *The Religious Life of London*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), p. 352.

²⁹ Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

Gate, felt a sense of relief when the centre was completed as they did not need to expend energy on repairs for some time after the opening of their centres (Fig 4.2).³⁰

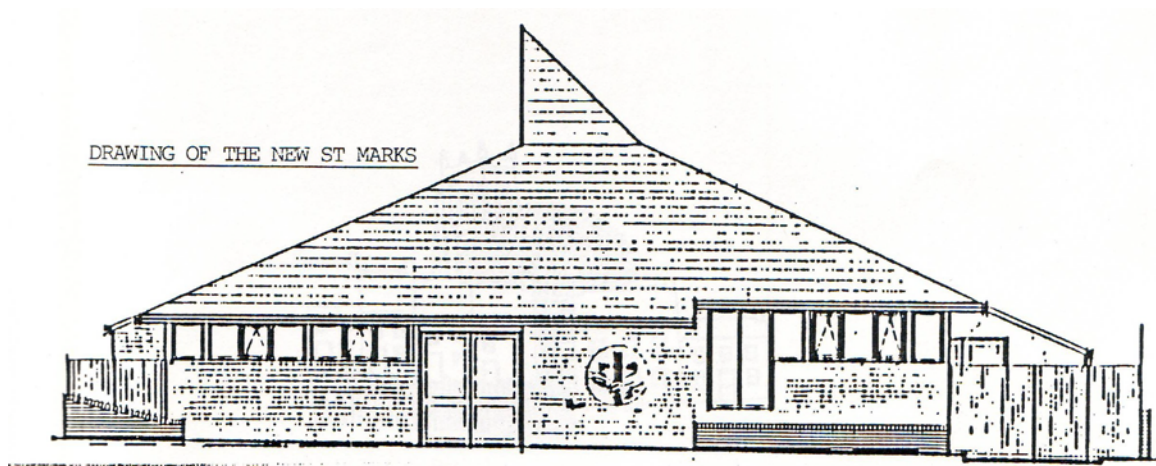


Figure 4.2 The new St Mark's, Forest Gate.

The author's collection.

In the struggle for survival, energy that once was put into propping up failing plant could now be expended elsewhere on what were felt to be more positive and relevant activities. Many of those interviewed could not conceive of what the Church of England in Newham would have looked like if these buildings had not been developed, or if indeed the church would have survived at all. Two years on from his Church's opening, Martin Wallace could write with enthusiasm about how successful St Mark's building now was in a report to the deanery and diocese.³¹

Like St Bartholomew's, the vision and execution of the new St Mark's fell to one individual, the then Vicar, Martin Wallace. He had come from a fairly conventional churchgoing family. Interestingly, he had ties with the local area. He was born in Walthamstow a few miles from Forest Gate and an uncle had been warden of a church in the deanery.³² In interview he stressed the significance of the social gospel that had shaped his early ministry, serving his title in Sheffield. He recalled that the memory of Edward Wickham and the Sheffield Industrial Mission was still active in his day. It was

³⁰ Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

³¹ London, Fox Archive, Martin Wallace, Barking Urban Mission Project, p. 64.

³² Interview, Wallace, 25 July 2011.

his interaction with the laity he met there that he believed shaped the future pattern of his ministry.³³ He was keenly aware of the middle class nature of Anglican life and the hurdles this seemed to present to working class people.³⁴ He was to struggle with these restrictions for his entire ministry at St Mark's.

Much of the responsibility fell to him in guiding the project and, like Lowe before him, Martin Wallace found the experience of redevelopment daunting. Again, like Lowe, he met opposition to the project from his own congregation, although it seemed these objections were always more vocal than numerous. The vast majority of the congregation were supportive of the redevelopment. One surprising area of opposition came from a few neighbours who were fearful of change. They were unhappy that the church might be used more and even complained about the organ music shattering the quiet of their Sundays. Martin reminded them that the church had been there over a hundred years. For some, church life and culture were becoming an alien intrusion. The reality was that many neighbours welcomed the developments as this meant an ill-used and vulnerable building was transformed into a community amenity. Key to the development at St Mark's was Martin Purdy of whom Wallace spoke highly. Indeed it was the St Mark's development that formed the basis for Purdy's work on adapting and redeveloping church buildings, *Churches and Chapels: A Design and Development Guide* (1991).³⁵ Alongside him, the other key person was yet again Stephen Lowe, who by 1986 was the Diocesan Urban Liaison Officer. With Martin's appointment as Area Dean in 1982 St Mark's was in a strategically advantageous position to lobby for funding and support for redevelopment.

How then did St Mark's, Forest Gate, achieve the goal? St Mark's was on a much smaller scale than St Bartholomew's. It was estimated that the entire project would cost half a million pounds, as opposed to a budget of one and a half million that East Ham had to find. Also, significantly, the diocese was now taking the need to rejuvenate Newham

³³ Interview, Wallace, 25 July 2011.

³⁴ Interview, Wallace, 25 July 2011. This was a factor that was recognized by the report *Faith in the City*. Chaired by O'Brien, p. 31.

³⁵ Martin Purdy, *Churches and Chapels: A Design and Development Guide* (London: Butterworth Architects, 1991).

seriously and was willing and able to provide substantial funds towards this aim. Martin Wallace recalled he felt justified in challenging the diocese to support the work of St Mark's in a frank conversation with the then Bishop of Barking, Jim Roxbourough.³⁶ What was remarkable was the diocese had these resources to outlay and they were willing to invest them in the inner-city. This resulted in the diocese generously agreeing to provide four hundred and fifty thousand pounds towards the cost of the project with St Mark's having to raise the remaining fifty thousand pounds.³⁷

Paradoxically, it was with the amalgamation of rural benefices in the diocese and the redundancy of their vicarages that inner-city churches like St Mark's reaped a reward. Their vicarages were sold, enabling their proceeds to be invested in developments such as Forest Gate. Clearly something substantial was occurring at this point. It is no surprise that these initiatives developed in the era of *Faith in the City*. Newham was itself to make its own contribution to the document, although, it would be later projects that would benefit from the full force of this report.³⁸ It was felt by leaders such as Martin Wallace that attitudes in the diocese were very favourable to urban Newham and the significant resource of the London Over the Border Fund (LOB), and the support of the then Archdeacon, Peter Dawes, crucial.³⁹ This seemed to be a very fitting use of LOB's funds, established as it was to provide new churches for the growing sprawl of London, east of the river Lea. Far from an irrelevant and draining backwater Newham was felt to be worth fighting for by those who controlled the power in Chelmsford Diocese.

St Mark's was expected to make a contribution towards the rebuild and Martin Wallace recalled that fifty thousand pounds in the 1980s was a substantial amount of money. Thus, like St Bartholomew's, the congregation became actively involved in raising funds. St Mark's sold unwanted church furniture and St Mark's pews became garden seats in parishioners' gardens.⁴⁰ They held stage shows and even ran a street collection.⁴¹ The

³⁶ Interview, Wallace, 25 July 2011.

³⁷ Interview, Wallace, 25 July 2011.

³⁸ Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

³⁹ Interview, Wallace, 25 July 2011.

⁴⁰ Interview, Palmer, 29 July 2011.

⁴¹ Interview, Palmer, 29 July 2011.

task was to raise the funds in three years and they achieved it in two. Again this reflected a substantial commitment by the laity that was indicative of the support for such a project. This suggests a highly organized and motivated congregation that could achieve much with the right leadership and a common goal to work towards.

Perhaps one of the most remarkable aspects of St Mark's redevelopment was their temporary accommodation, whilst the church was demolished and rebuilt. Like St Bartholomew's, which utilized Fellowship House as their base, St Mark's needed a space to worship in and this came in the form of the local Health Centre. A newly arrived member of the congregation, Ellen Kemp, worked as an administrator to the National Health Service Trust. Thanks largely to her personal connections it was agreed to offer St Mark's a large room in the local Health Centre as a worship space.⁴² The blending of a secular Health Centre with an Anglican Congregation would have been inconceivable five years later, yet thanks to one lay person's connection between both, a temporary partnership was formed with no suggestion that church or doctors felt this was inappropriate.⁴³ Like Fellowship House, the doctor's surgery became something of a milestone and place of formation for the congregation. Numbers actually grew whilst there and worship was able to become more informal as a prelude to the new worship site. Faith was becoming once again a respected element in peoples' lives in Newham and one that outside agencies were willing to support or at the very least were finding it difficult to ignore. This altered only when the religious makeup of the borough became so diverse that attempting to accommodate every faith's needs in such circumstance would have been impractical.

Significantly, perhaps echoing the conservation movement, St Mark's actively preserved some key elements of the old building. These included a sizeable stained glass window dedicated to the fallen of the First World War. Yet again there was a debate around the function of the church space as holy and Purdy was to recall: 'Buildings were understood as necessary and important aids to this church's work, but the need to preserve sacred,

⁴² Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

⁴³ Interview, Wallace, 25 July 2011.

cultic space, or to seek a numinous atmosphere for worship, was not considered an essential ingredient.’⁴⁴ There was to be a compromise in identity which was the more remarkable given the Evangelical leaning of the congregation. No overt Christian image was placed on the new building, only its name and an illustration of two hands, greeting one another with a very discreet cross in the background (Fig 4.3). This presented both



**Figure 4.3 The simplest of images of the cross on the main entrance to St Mark's, Forest Gate.
The author's collection.**

the changing nature of Newham as a multi-cultural borough and the growing awareness that there was a sense that much religious iconography and language was felt to be a barrier to engagement. This, as has been noted, was a concern for Martin Wallace since his curacy. Ironically, St Mark's was willing to sacrifice these elements of identity in the hope that it would breakdown obstacles to those outside the Church.

Forest Gate designed its building with a corridor that reflected the level of commitment people felt towards the Church. All those interviewed who were involved in the redevelopment and the present church spoke of the path way into the church. The

⁴⁴ Purdy, *Churches and Chapels*, p. 47.

entrance was a neutral space used for socializing, with a corridor leading off into various community rooms, culminating in the access to the church proper.⁴⁵ This passageway physically reflected the level of commitment someone might have from open welcoming space, what Purdy called the ‘breathing space’, a neutral area that led through to the actual church and full engagement with all that St Mark’s believed in.⁴⁶ Clearly, St Mark’s was willing to adapt its space to offer an enticing building for the community to enter that both reflected a growing disquiet about religious iconography becoming more esoteric and less meaningful to outsiders, and yet at the same time a confidence in the identity of the church that need not overtly describe itself as church. St Bartholomew’s reflected a theology of inclusion, all activities of the site reflecting something of the Kingdom. St Mark’s reflected faith as a journey that began with a club or community group and culminated in commitment to Christ.

A simple question that could be asked of these buildings was what they hoped to gain by such redevelopments. Clearly, one aspect for St Mark’s was to offer a welcoming space that would encourage new members. Yet even here, as has been noted, their approach was subtle and nuanced. St Mark’s, Forest Gate, one of the most confidently Evangelistic churches in the borough, did not want to hard sell the Gospel, but nor did they want to repel people either. Thus one aim was to make the buildings more attractive. There was a growing recognition churches had to do more to create a comfortable, distinctive interior.⁴⁷ In interview Martin Wallace said the purpose of the new St Mark’s, Forest Gate, was to create a building that would feel as open and easy as possible.⁴⁸ Adherence to a local church seemed to be now partly dependant on how willing it was to market itself. This was a subtle, but significant shift in power as different churches vied for new members. This attitude reflected Wallace’s concern for the trappings of religion that were a hindrance to this sense of welcome. He recalls one discussion with a parishioner that constantly felt traditional church architecture spoke more of judgment and condemnation than welcome and love. This attitude was always held in tension with the

⁴⁵ Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

⁴⁶ Purdy, *Churches and Chapels*, p. 64.

⁴⁷ George Appleton, *Glad Encounter: Jesus Christ and the Living Faith of Men* (London: Edinburgh Press, 1959), p. 54.

⁴⁸ London, SMFGCA, *Essex Churchman*, July 1987.

fact that the iconic image of the Gothic church was a powerful and familiar one with the un-churched parishioner. Helen Palmer, a member of St Mark's, Forest Gate, recalled how formidable and uninviting the old church was.⁴⁹ St Mark's, Forest Gate, had to do some work convincing its neighbours that it was primarily a church rather than just a community centre.⁵⁰

The parish worked hard to make the space available to a wide group of users. Forest Gate wanted to create a building that was flexible enough for different groups to use at the same time.⁵¹ There was a delight that the building could just be open to greet people.⁵² In the past buildings had become redundant because their spaces were so inflexible to changing circumstances. As a reaction to this St Mark's, Forest Gate, insisted that every piece of church furniture could be moved to enable the church to be as adaptable as possible. Like St Bartholomew's, it had partition walls that could be removed to increase the worship space or decrease it when required. Built into the church design was a recognition that change and adaptation were a part of Newham life and these new buildings were not to experience the same fate of redundancy as their predecessors had as monuments to past hubris.

What gains did the church achieve in numerical growth? Looking at the electoral roll figures for this period there does indeed seem to be some gains.⁵³ Significantly, for St Mark's, its greatest rise in adherents came when it met in the Health Centre, so much so they had to revise their plans for their new church to increase the seating. Yet, by the mid-1980s, St Mark's, Forest Gate, claimed an average attendance of one hundred and ten on a Sunday morning.⁵⁴ What was becoming evident was that new Christians were few in number. Gill had highlighted the prevailing trend that from the early twentieth-century new growth came from the congregation itself.⁵⁵ Numerical growth came from

⁴⁹ Interview, Palmer, 29 July 2011.

⁵⁰ Simon Law, 'New Buildings Initiated, in Part, as a response to Faith in the City', (unpublished dissertation, North Thames Ministerial Training Scheme, 96), p. 14.

⁵¹ London, SMFGCA, Essex Churchman, July 1987.

⁵² Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

⁵³ See Table 5.1 on page 224.

⁵⁴ Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

⁵⁵ Robin Gill, *The Myth of the Empty Church* (London: SPCK, 1993), p. 190.

committed Christians moving into the parish and St Mark's admitted that fresh conversions through the new building were small.⁵⁶ The inviting aspect of these new buildings should not be played down. These new centres were more flexible and conducive to welcome and contemporary worship needs.

One of the most wearing drawbacks for ministers was the deadening impact these old church buildings were felt to have on creative liturgy. Simon Law remembers how hard it was to develop more innovative worship given the restrictions of the old St Mark's.⁵⁷ Liturgical experimentation was now growing amongst Anglicans and Martin Wallace felt that much contemporary, innovative worship was a feature of St Mark's life decades before movements such as 'Fresh Expressions'. Yet even here there was a respect for traditions that harked back to an earlier era. Simon Law, originally a member of St Mark's, Forest Gate, was impressed with St Mark's liturgy, 'There was a choir, so the traditional worship of the church was actually good.... you wouldn't shy away from it and think it was... badly done, it was well done.'⁵⁸ Significantly though, traditional worship was no longer felt sufficient alone for a contemporary church's needs.

Creating an intimate space for more personal prayer was an important feature of these buildings. All had chapels that reflected a deviation from J. G. Davies' original vision. Simon Law was clearly proud of the fact that he initiated a morning prayer in the new St Mark's at which clergy and laity could attend.⁵⁹ This need for a space, set aside for quiet and contemplation, transcended church traditions. All the developments created chapels that could be used for small gatherings. In the Babel of urban life stillness was becoming a scarce and valued commodity that these building could provide. One of the characteristics of these developments was their ability to open up a quiet space for a wide range of people to access. This was an invitation that drew in people of all faiths and none. These churches could safely support this longstanding need in a way that their predecessors could not.

⁵⁶ London, Fox Archive, Martin Wallace, Barking Urban Mission Project, p. 91.

⁵⁷ Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

⁵⁸ Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

⁵⁹ Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

The most significant feature of these buildings was their wide social and community life that encouraged the local church to look beyond its own concerns. This contrasted greatly with their past isolation. St Mark's, Forest Gate, had a youth club, play group, Girl Guides, a slimming club, a music group, lunch club, an amateur dramatics club; the St Mark's visitors, fellowship groups, and a summer play scheme. The parish magazine was reaching approximately half the population of the parish.⁶⁰ By 1993 they had dropped a copy of St Mark's Gospel into each household in the parish with a copy of the history of the parish.⁶¹ There was a neighbourhood visiting scheme that St Mark's hosted.⁶² There was a lunch club attended by between thirty and seventy people.⁶³ They had social outreach beyond their parish with a fortnightly food run to the homeless of central London.⁶⁴ At its height they were serving two hundred meals to rough sleepers at the Embankment.⁶⁵ There was an environmental group, a training course for Lay Readers and St Mark's continued to be host to thirty different groups.⁶⁶ Almost all of these projects were initiated by Christians in the congregation and run by them. A significant means of maintaining their religious ethos and controlling the work of the centre was for Christians to be at the heart of the work in the centre. They may not have been delivering frontline social services but they were offering a much-needed addition to welfare in the borough that touched and enriched the lives of many who would not readily enter a church for worship.

One of the increasing elements within the life of inner-city areas like Newham was a rapidly changing context over which local people had very limited control. This meant that as well as subtly different approaches these projects took to achieve their goals, they also had to deal with new issues that had not been envisioned before them. One of these was the rise in immigration, that had only just begun when St Bartholomew's was being

⁶⁰ London, SMFGCA, Martin Wallace, Moving On, p. 41.

⁶¹ London, Fox Archive, Martin Wallace, Barking Urban Mission Project, p. 90.

⁶² London, Fox Archive, Martin Wallace, Barking Urban Mission Project, p. 127.

⁶³ London, Fox Archive, Martin Wallace, Barking Urban Mission Project, p. 96.

⁶⁴ London, SMFGCA, Martin Wallace, Moving On, p. 41.

⁶⁵ London, Fox Archive, Martin Wallace, Barking Urban Mission Project, p. 109.

⁶⁶ London, Fox Archive, Martin Wallace, Barking Urban Mission Project, p. 129. Interview, Law, 20 June 2011. London, Fox Archive, Martin Wallace, Barking Urban Mission Project, p. 64.

developed, but which was to prove a significant issue for St Mark's, Forest Gate. Their parish population in the early 1980s was eighteen percent Asian, and fifteen percent Afro-Caribbean.⁶⁷ Worship in the new building now had a growing multi-cultural dimension to it.⁶⁸ This expressed itself in a variety of musical styles in worship.⁶⁹ Such rapid change brought its problems. There was a rise in anti-Islamic feeling both internationally and locally in Newham.⁷⁰ Other faiths had caused a significant identity crisis for some forcefully Evangelistic Christians. Simon Law suggested a note of anxiety about the shared use of rooms by people of different faiths in these new community complexes.⁷¹ St Mark's, Forest Gate, would have felt uncomfortable about letting space to Muslim groups for religious rites.⁷² This would have been a gesture of inclusion that was too radical for some local churches. Indeed there was an emerging debate reflected in the pages of the *Newham Recorder* that echoed the angst of local Christians when it came to the new faith communities making a home in the borough.⁷³

It might be assumed the older denominations were now increasingly in competition with what might be perceived to be dynamic new expressions of Christianity brought over from Africa and the Caribbean. However, the established churches held significant power. St Mark's, Forest Gate, was supportive of their neighbouring black-led congregation but had no space to rent out their building to them. This was unlike almost every other Anglican Church in Newham which was to have an independent Evangelical church sharing parts of its buildings by the 1990s. This indicated the strength and vibrancy of these new denominations but also the control older denominations could exert. Few of these new churches could afford their own premises and thus they depended on rented space from the established Christians in Newham. Their status rarely developed beyond that of tenants. On their part Anglicans wished to be welcoming and supportive but found building relationships with disparate, fragmented and what were felt

⁶⁷ London, SMFGCA, Martin Wallace, *Moving On*, p. 8.

⁶⁸ London, SMFGCA, Martin Wallace, *Moving On*, p. 41.

⁶⁹ London, SMFGCA, Martin Wallace, *Moving On*, p. 41.

⁷⁰ Andy McSmith, *No Such Thing As Society A History of Britain in the 1980s* (London: Constable, 2010), p. 95.

⁷¹ Law, 'New Buildings Initiated', p. 22.

⁷² Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

⁷³ *Newham Recorder*, 2 November 1972, p. 58.

to be socially impenetrable ethnic groups arduous. Canon Law prevented even the use of the worship site without a complex ecumenical partnership, other church rooms in the new centres being the only alternative.

There was a perception that traditional spheres of mission and ministry like contact with schools were closing down. One source of concern that affected many outside the Church was the role religion played in schools with an increasing multi-cultural aspect to assemblies and the decline in acknowledging traditional Christian festivals.⁷⁴ Ironically, this was fed by a growing perception by the Church that institutions like schools were ambivalent towards Christianity. Simon Law recalled a local head teacher in Forest Gate who refused to allow him to speak to her school because she wanted to support vulnerable non-Christian groups. He felt that by that stage Christianity was actually a minority group in the area.⁷⁵ Religion had to be acknowledged by secular agencies but this did not always result in a ready welcome for the Church.

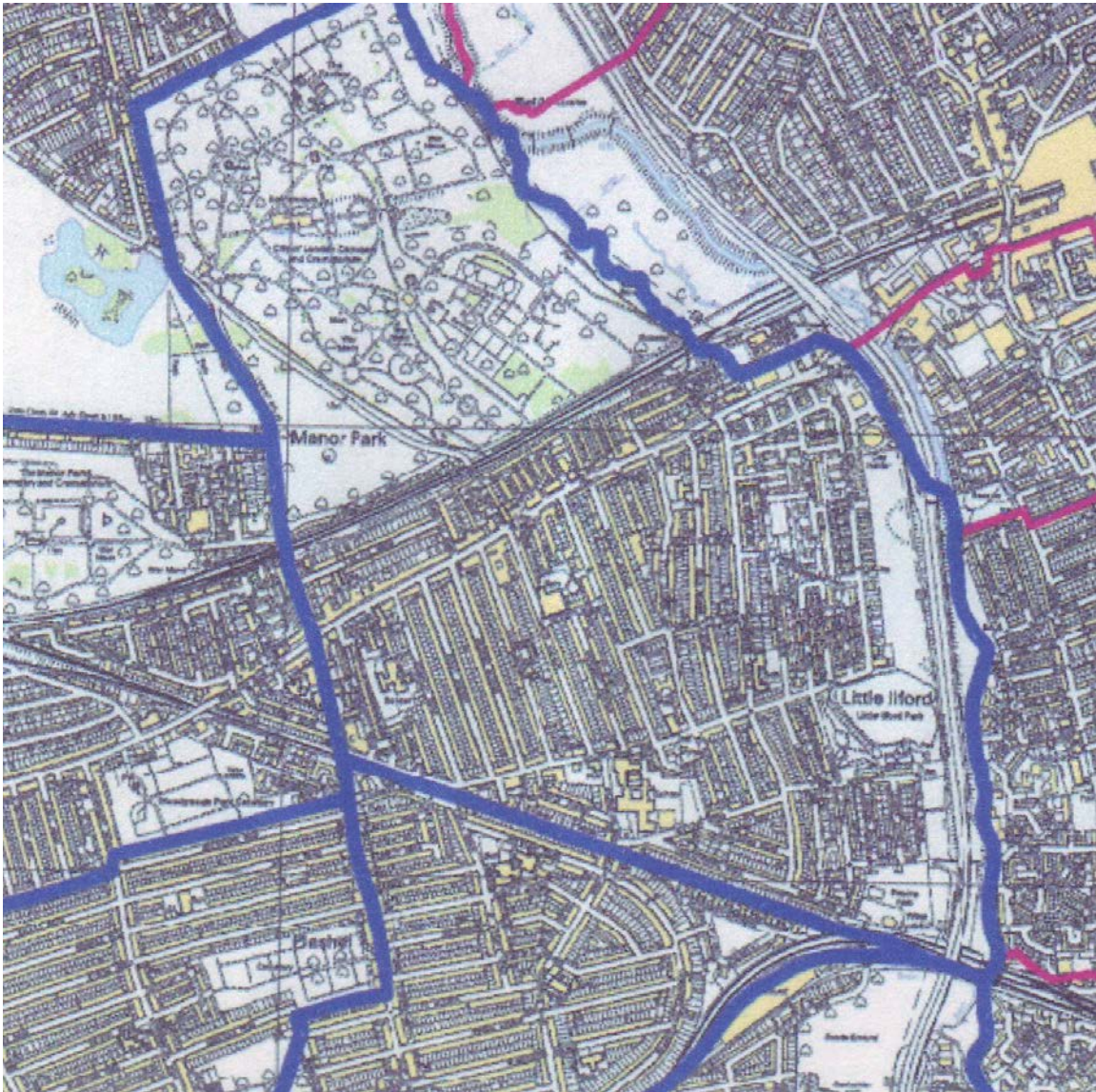
The St Mark's development owed much to the East Ham project and there were significant similarities and characteristics that link both schemes. At the same time there were subtle differences that reflect a changing context in Newham that the Church of England was not oblivious to, nor unwilling to negotiate with. Evangelical churches like St Mark's wanted to state they welcomed new communities into the borough, even when they struggled with how best to achieve this, whilst maintaining what they felt was a Christian identity. Significantly, they were willing to shed any outward trappings of religion that might hinder engagement with local people. It felt as though the diocese was already gearing itself up to support renewal in the borough even predicting the energy of *Faith in the City*. It is with the next project at St Michael's, Little Ilford, that the report really lent support to the diocese in developing Newham churches.

⁷⁴ *Newham Recorder*, 12 November 1987, p. 8.

⁷⁵ Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

St Michael's, Little Ilford

St Michael's, Little Ilford, is a parish on the north eastern end of the borough adjoining the London borough of Redbridge (Map 4.2).



Map 4.2. The boundaries of the parish of Little Ilford.

Source: Chelmsford Diocesan Office.

This parish is bounded on the north and east by the Deanery of Redbridge. Their near neighbour to the south is the parish of St Barnabas', Manor Park and to the west All Saints', Forest Gate. Its northern most extent encompasses the City of London Cemetery, the largest of its kind in north east Europe.

Its formal title is the parish of Little Ilford although few of its residents would recognize that name now and are more familiar with the area being called Manor Park. Both names harked back to a rural past and in fact St Michael's had within its parish one of the three ancient churches of the borough, St Mary's, Little Ilford (Fig 4.4).



Figure 4.4 St Mary's, Little Ilford, one of the original ancient parishes in Newham, now in the parish of St Michael's, Little Ilford.
The author's collection.

A twelfth century church, it was still a place of worship for Anglicans. However, by the late nineteenth century the parish was growing and a new worship site was built on the Romford Road that could accommodate a much larger population than the small Norman church. For much of the first half of the century it was two separate parishes but from the post-war period was a combined benefice. It stands in the Liberal Catholic tradition. The parish is bounded by the London borough of Redbridge to the east and to the north the largest cemetery in Northern Europe, the City of London, parts of which are in the parish. It is split in two from east to west by the Romford Road and its southern boundary is the over ground railway from London to Southend. Its western boundary is formed by High Street North that leads into East Ham town-centre. It is one of the most culturally diverse

parishes in the deanery. Thanks to a substantial Hindu temple just outside its boundaries and a number of Mosques within, it is home to Hindus, Muslims and a community of Sikhs. In the late 1980s and early 1990s it was an area of significant deprivation due to poor and overcrowded housing stock.

Like St Bartholomew's before it and St Mark's, Forest Gate, the catalyst for change at St Michael's was the parlous state of its building. St Michael's had significant repair bills dating back to the early 1970s.⁷⁶ They needed to raise between £2,968 and £7,322 for renovation, a significant sum in 1973.⁷⁷ Tragically, the then Rector Canon Ron Webb died and with the new appointment the diocese felt that the problem of Little Ilford had to be tackled.

When the newly appointed Rector, John Whitwell, came to Manor Park in 1978 he sensed he was appointed with a mandate to deal with the buildings.⁷⁸ The spacious Edwardian church of St Michael's, built like St Bartholomew's and St Mark's, with the assumption that large congregations would be the norm, was now a deterrent to worship. In 1902 the morning congregation seemed to be around the 400 mark on a Sunday.⁷⁹ By the 1970s it had dwindled to around fifty. John Whitwell recalled how cold and unyielding the old St Michael's was. Simply heating such buildings was proving complex and costly.⁸⁰ St Michael's was now a building out of its time, unsuited for more contemporary worship needs. An important function of the new centre would be a building where they could better worship God as well as serve the community.⁸¹

Again, like St Mark's before it, grants were available for those churches that were buildings of undeniable architectural merit. John Whitwell initiated a programme of restoration for St Mary's. He had little problem receiving funds to restore the Norman

⁷⁶ London, SMLICA, Fourth Inspection Under the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955, July 1971.

⁷⁷ London, SMLICA, Letters, White and Miles to Webb, 22 June 1973.

⁷⁸ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

⁷⁹ Mudie-Smith, *The Religious Life of London*, p. 357.

⁸⁰ London, SMLICA, Minutes St Michael's PCC, 22 January 1985.

⁸¹ London, SMLICA, Minutes the Annual Parochial Church Meeting St Michael's, 8 April 1984.

church in the parish but when it came to an undistinguished turn of the century building it was much harder.⁸²

Like other parts of the borough Manor Park was to face the growing problem of vandalism and petty crime. The hall at St Michael's was particularly susceptible to break-ins.⁸³ These new buildings would not entirely solve the problem of security but when well used felt less forlorn and vulnerable.

Like East Ham, duplication of premises was also a problem faced by these parishes. Little Ilford had not just the Edwardian church of St Michael's and the ancient church of St Mary the Virgin but also a mission church, St John's and a community building called the Little Eye Club as well as a range of halls attached to the St Michael's site (Fig 4.5 and 4.6).



Figure 4.5 The Little Eye Club. With the permission of the Rector and PCC of the parish of Little Ilford.

⁸² Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

⁸³ London, SMLICA, Minutes St Michael's PCC, 11 September 1985.



Figure 4.6 St John's Institute, Manor Park. The Little Eye Club and St John's are two examples of church buildings scattered around the parish of Little Ilford. With the permission of the Rector and PCC of the parish of Little Ilford.

St Michael's was responsible for five separate buildings in the parish with an electoral roll of only about a hundred.⁸⁴ These were all in various stages of disrepair. John Whitwell felt that even if they had money to maintain them what would be the point if they could not be utilised in more imaginative ways.⁸⁵ There was an awareness that conducting services was not enough, the life of a church's buildings had to be broader and more appealing.

St Michael's was influenced by what had been achieved at St Bartholomew's and what its neighbours in Forest Gate were working towards. John Whitwell in interview acknowledged the debt owed to Stephen Lowe.⁸⁶ Stephen Lowe attended early PCC meetings at St Michael's and offered support and advice to John Whitwell.⁸⁷ However, St Michael's was a substantial development beyond East Ham. In the intervening years

⁸⁴ London, SMLICA, Minutes the Annual Parochial Church Meeting St Michael's, 8 April 1984.

⁸⁵ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

⁸⁶ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

⁸⁷ London, SMLICA, Minutes St Michael's PCC, 13 March 1984.

building costs had risen and a joint venture was thought to be the only viable option. Yet, in the completion of the new development, St Michael's felt a sense of relief that they did not need to expend energy on repairs for some time after the opening of their centres.⁸⁸ An undervalued resource was the fact these churches had substantial land assets, like St Bartholomew's had before it, that were to be highly desirable to outside agencies. St Michael's raised much of its share of the project by selling other sites they owned in the parish.⁸⁹ Buildings that were once thought burdens were transformed into cash. These projects could also draw in substantial sums from non-church agencies. St Michael's received over a million and a half pounds from Aston Charities towards the joint venture.⁹⁰

Unlike St Bartholomew's and St Mark's, there was little documentation that survives that indicates an overt theology played a meaningful part in moulding the new building. There was an evident, although imprecise, expectation that the new centre at St Michael's would respond to the physical as well as spiritual needs of the community.⁹¹ Certainly, the influence of writers such as J. G. Davies was merely implicit. The closest one gets to such theology was the belief that St Michael's felt there was a correlation between communicating the Good News in word and action.⁹² What is apparent was the sense of possibilities for renewal that became apparent in these new developments. Neighbouring parishes looked with envy on what had been achieved and wanted to emulate their success. If there was any overt statement of what the new building hoped to achieve this was welcome to the community around it. This welcome was to come at a time when the population of Manor Park was rapidly changing.

John Whitwell arrived in the parish in 1978 at a period of considerable transition both for Manor Park and the borough. John sensed it still had the feel of the old East End about it with a lot of ex-dockers living in the parish, but this was to be transformed with the

⁸⁸ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011. Law. 20 June 2011.

⁸⁹ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

⁹⁰ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

⁹¹ London, SMLICA, Little Ilford News, April 1990.

⁹² London, SMLICA, Minutes the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. St Michael's, 17 March 1991.

arrival of new communities.⁹³ Manor Park was by the late 1980s becoming an important neighbourhood for Asian settlers.⁹⁴ By 1989 the parish had a population that was fifty percent Asian.⁹⁵ It was one thing to live in a community of nominal Christians who were indifferent to your message, quite another to a community that already had a lively faith of their own.

This could have been a source of great angst for Christians in the area as they faced a serious rival to their spiritual, pastoral and political identity. Indeed a number of people in Manor Park found it hard to adjust to this multi-cultural world they were thrust into.⁹⁶ Prejudice was a reality John Whitwell came across. Yet perhaps because of the prejudice that could be encountered in the borough at the time many in the Church felt they had to play a role in welcoming newcomers and supporting those they felt to be most at risk. John Whitwell wanted to stress the inclusive nature of the area.⁹⁷ This was indicative of a series of new protocols adopted by local churches that were replacing national ones Callum Brown felt had been abandoned from the late 1950s. Community, inclusion, equality and welcome were to be the watchwords of many of these developments.⁹⁸

St Michael's regularly affirmed in its literature that it wanted to reach out and support its Asian neighbours.⁹⁹ This was a significant new role the churches played and was often the first agency in the borough to voice this concern, calling for inclusion, welcome and justice for these new communities. This stance by the churches was at a time when other agencies including the Council were hesitant about their arrival in the borough. Instead of rejecting these non-Christian neighbours the churches were in their public statements actively welcoming them, hardly the actions of a community that felt threatened by their arrival. Even in Newham there were issues around the shared use or sale of church

⁹³ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

⁹⁴ London, SMLICA, Little Ilford News Letter, September 1988.

⁹⁵ London, SMLICA, St Michael's Church and the Aston Centre. An outline Summary of the Background to the Development Taking Place on the Site of St Michael's Church, Romford Road, Manor Park, May 1989.

⁹⁶ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

⁹⁷ London, SMLICA, Letters, Dawes to Whitwell, 24 December 1987.

⁹⁸ Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding secularisation 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 13.

⁹⁹ London, SMLICA, Minutes St Michael's PCC, 10 March 1987.

buildings to people of other faiths.¹⁰⁰ Yet very often relationships were formed and new initiatives developed by the churches as a means of understanding and supporting the new faith communities. One generous step was made by St Barnabas when it sold its old church hall to the local Sikh community to build a place of worship.

St Michael's wished to move quickly on the project and did not seek external funding from outside agencies like St Bartholomew's did. Unlike St Bartholomew's and St Mark's, the St Michael's project had to seek a partner that would jointly own the premises. It was larger and more complex than St Mark's and thus was more expensive. It needed a partner who would provide substantial funds for the project, buying into the land owned by the Church by creating a joint church and community centre. The answer to the need came when Aston Charities, one of the old charitable trusts that harked back to the days of the settlements wished to expand their influence to the eastern end of the borough. Its then head, Revd Jimmy Froud, began conversations with St Michael's PCC and, in the words of John Whitwell, was felt to be a person he could do business with.¹⁰¹ Jimmy Froud had an unconventional career as an Anglican priest serving abroad before coming to work for Aston in the early 1960s (See Chapter Two). So significant a figure in Aston's history was Jimmy Froud that the part of the St Michael's complex controlled by Aston was to be named the Froud Centre. John Whitwell came from a much more local background. He was the son of a docker and grew up in neighbouring borough of Dagenham.¹⁰² John served his title at one of the most iconic parishes of the East End, St Dunstan's, Stepney.¹⁰³ He moved to a more suburban area for his second curacy in the Diocese of Chelmsford and then on to Walthamstow. It was from here that the then Bishop of Barking, James Adams, asked him to look at St Michael's on the death of Canon Webb.

How then did they achieve their goal and create the new St Michael's Church and Froud Centre? Like the other developments, the new proposal to demolish the old St Michael's

¹⁰⁰ London, SMLICA, Report of Director of Planning and Architecture, Planning and Redevelopment Committee, 17 June 1985.

¹⁰¹ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

¹⁰² Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

¹⁰³ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

and start again was not without its opposition. Indeed St Michael's had something of a reputation for hostile PCCs and John Whitwell recalled an early meeting with them prior to his taking up the post of Rector that felt very confrontational. Days before his licensing, John Whitwell recalled, one potent example of resistance to change was the organist resigning on the spot when expected to use a new hymn book.¹⁰⁴ Ironically, it was this resignation that was, in John Whitwell's opinion, to offer a way of discussing change and development that would prove less threatening to the congregation. The new organist arrived with her two sons who quickly became valued members of the congregation. It was when the youngest boy was training to be an architect that he presented an imaginative design for a redeveloped St Michael's to the parish. (Fig 4.7)

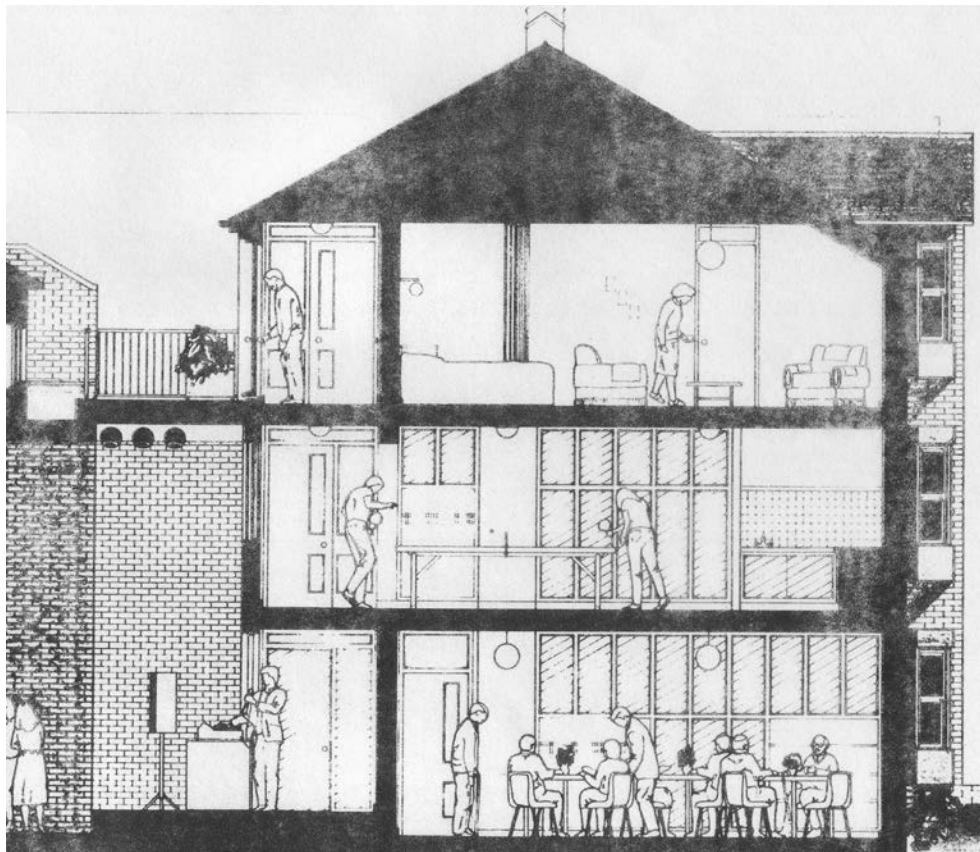


Figure 4.7 Original design for St Michael's, Little Ilford. With the permission of the Rector and PCC of the parish of Little Ilford.

¹⁰⁴ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011, Law, 20 June 2011.

John Whitwell felt this captured the imagination of leading members of the congregation and the suggestion for redevelopment came from one of their own. The seeds were sown for the Aston partnership.

There was of course a challenge when working with secular agencies in that there would be a change in power dynamics. The collaboration with Springboard Housing nearly faltered at an early stage.¹⁰⁵ St Michael's was entering into a partnership with an organization that had its origins in the Christian faith but was beginning to develop into a secular charity. There was an acknowledgment that St Michael's had made some sacrifices in building the new centre.¹⁰⁶ Both had to learn how to work alongside each other.¹⁰⁷ There was recognition that this would be a challenge for both partners.¹⁰⁸ It was a new and unknown direction the Church was moving in that could benefit the people of Newham and John Whitwell reminded his congregation, 'We need to look at the whole scheme as a partnership between us [the Church] and Aston Charities, working together to serve all the people of Manor Park.'¹⁰⁹ New ways of working together had to be developed to accommodate these new relationships¹¹⁰ Like the settlements before them, churches had to traverse this evolving landscape of outside control and were willing to do so when they could perceive the benefits to themselves and their communities.

Most significantly of all, St Michael's was developed in the wake of the publication of *Faith in the City* and, perhaps more practically, the establishment of the Church Urban Fund. It was these initiatives by the Church of England that substantially challenged the suggestion Christianity was now dead. Of all activities by the Church in the twentieth-century it was *Faith in the City* that captured secular historians' imaginations. It was after all one of the few events in Church history that authors such as Roy Porter record.¹¹¹ Whereas in the past they were content to ignore the Church, now they felt compelled to acknowledge its contribution to society. The evidence from Chelmsford Diocese suggests

¹⁰⁵ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 1, Letters, Adams to Lowe, 16 October 1978.

¹⁰⁶ London, SMLICA, Minutes of St Michael's PCC, 13 March 1990.

¹⁰⁷ London, SMLICA, Little Ilford News Letter, March 1990.

¹⁰⁸ London, SMLICA, Minutes St Michael's PCC, 10 February 1987.

¹⁰⁹ London, SMLICA, Minutes The Annual Parochial Church Meeting St Michael's, 25 March 1990.

¹¹⁰ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

¹¹¹ Roy Porter, *London a Social History* (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 469.

a wealth of activities around the county aimed at raising funds for the Inner-city Appeal. There was an ability to call upon substantial backers and talent in raising the profile of the church and income to match.

The Church was able to not just challenge society's attitudes to the poor, but practically tackle the issue of deprivation. Unlike other agencies, the Church of England had paid workers living in these communities and who were able to speak with a note of authority about their needs. It was this that enabled the influence of *Faith in the City* to shape the history of urban Anglicans in the last quarter of the century.¹¹² Certainly with the creation of the Church Urban Fund, the then Archdeacon of West Ham, Peter Dawes, felt that the diocese was 'putting its money where its mouth is...'¹¹³ Ambitiously the Church Urban Fund was to bring *Faith in the City* into almost every parish in the diocese in its bid to raise its quota.¹¹⁴ Chelmsford was expected to contribute £800,000 towards the national target of £18,000,000.¹¹⁵ John Waine, the Bishop of Chelmsford, wanted to go one step further and alongside the appeal for funds for CUF he wanted to raise a further £1,200,000 to support internal projects in the diocese through the 'Bishop of Chelmsford's Inner-city Appeal'. The *Newham Recorder* announced the launch of the Bishop's Appeal and by February 1989 Chelmsford had already raised £292,000 of which parishes had contributed £255,000.¹¹⁶ In return it was estimated that Chelmsford had already received £3,000,000 worth of funding for eleven projects.¹¹⁷ The fund had swelled to £1,500,000 by June 1991.¹¹⁸ The whole of Chelmsford Diocese was asked to raise funds including Newham itself.

The impact of *Faith in the City* on Chelmsford Diocese was considerable given that three out of its five London Boroughs were designated predominantly Urban Priority Areas (UPA). There were forty UPA parishes out of five hundred in the diocese and Newham

¹¹² Jonathan Mantle, *Archbishop: The Life and Times of Robert Runcie* (London: Sinclair Stevenson, 1991), p 276.

¹¹³ London, Fox Archive, Notes for Saffron Walden Deanery, 5 February 1989.

¹¹⁴ London, Fox Archive, Notes for Ardleigh, undated c 1988.

¹¹⁵ London, Fox Archive, Notes for Saffron Walden Deanery, 5 February 1989.

¹¹⁶ London, Fox Archive, Notes for Saffron Walden Deanery, 5 February 1989.

¹¹⁷ London, Fox Archive, Notes for Saffron Walden Deanery, 5 February 1989.

¹¹⁸ London, Fox Archive, Letters, Dalliston to Baker, 6 O'clock Live LWT, 11 April 1991.

was perceived to be the second poorest borough in the country.¹¹⁹ It even received a visit from Robert Runcie as he publicised the report, stopping to play snooker at a youth club in Canning Town.¹²⁰ The PCC of St Michael's in May 1989 noted that there would be fifteen new workers coming to the diocese as a result of the Archbishop's Commission. They were hoping, at one stage, to negotiate having a schools worker in the parish.¹²¹ By 1993 there were thirty-eight projects running in Chelmsford supported by the Church Urban Fund.¹²² This was seen as a 'massive investment' of resources for Chelmsford.¹²³ Unsurprisingly, a number of these projects were based in Newham and attached to the churches that had been redeveloped. St Mark's, Forest Gate, received funding for a visitor's project, St Mark's, Beckton, obtained core revenue for a neighbourhood worker, and St Michael's neighbouring parish received a grant for an inter-faith worker that overlapped with their needs.¹²⁴ By this time older agencies such as Newham Community Renewal Programme were also benefiting from the Church Urban Fund. They received funding towards a £32,000 project to support the homeless.¹²⁵ The sense of transformation of the morale of a deanery within a decade could not have been more marked.

St Michael's was helped by the timing of the report even though their congregation was already seriously contemplating redevelopment.¹²⁶ Where *Faith in the City* played a significant role was in giving many of these later projects permission to develop. John Whitwell remembers how at the beginning of their journey the Council for the Care of Churches had blocked the proposal to demolish the old St Michael's.¹²⁷ The then

¹¹⁹ London, Fox Archive, Notes for Saffron Walden Deanery, 5 February 1989.

¹²⁰ *Newham Recorder*, 11 January 1987, p. 11.

¹²¹ London, SMLICA, Minutes St Michael's PCC, 8 May 1988.

¹²² London, Fox Archive, Martin Wallace, Barking Urban Mission Project, p. 34.

¹²³ London, Fox Archive, Martin Wallace, Barking Urban Mission Project, p. 35 These projects were not universally and uncritically accepted. A tantalising document that survive in the Archdeacon's archive, unnamed and undated but from around 1989 says there are an "array of neutral, unchallenging projects" the Diocese was now sponsoring. The author called for a serious debate about what the Fund was for and to think seriously about issues of justice and righteousness and damned the results of the project for no more than allowing the church in UPAs to 'care a little more'. London, Fox Archive, A Cry from the Heart.

¹²⁴ London, Fox Archive, Draft Document as part of the Bishop of Chelmsford's Inner-city Appeal.

¹²⁵ London, Fox Archive, Draft Document as part of the Bishop of Chelmsford's Inner-city Appeal.

¹²⁶ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011. Law, 20 June 2011.

¹²⁷ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

Archdeacon of West Ham, Peter Dawes raised the issue in the *Faith in the City* debate in General Synod on 5 February 1986 and said:

If we do not have the decision reversed on this, then in area after area churches like this, which the officers responsible say are not worth retention, will be retained by the actions of a few people devoted more to archaeology than mission and the Gospel.¹²⁸

The decision to retain the building was rescinded and St Michael's redevelopment could progress.

Quite disparate parts of the diocese were now focusing in on the inner-city and contributing generously to the appeal. St Augustine's, Thorpe Bay, on the extreme east of the diocese, contributed £4,890.64 through a series of events such as barbecues and private donations.¹²⁹ St Michael's, Roxwell, held a concert for the appeal.¹³⁰ The Essex police band offered their services for a similar concert in September 1989.¹³¹ St John the Baptist's, Danbury, organized a sponsored vigil and fast.¹³² For some it was an excuse to learn more about their neighbours in the city. St James', Little Tey, near Colchester invited the parish of St Matthew's, West Ham, to a village lunch and Songs of Praise.¹³³ Other parishes found an excuse to work with their direct neighbours as in the case of six parishes in Hadleigh Deanery.¹³⁴ A relatively small parish, All Saints, Rayne, near Brentwood was asked to raise £1,150 towards the appeal. They had tried to do this by direct giving and asked the wider village for support which was not forthcoming. However, the congregation, themselves, contributed £800 towards the total cost despite

¹²⁸ Anon, *Report of Proceedings: General Synod, February Group of Sessions 1986*, Vol. 17 No. 1 (London: Church House Publishing Limited, 1986. p. 149.

¹²⁹ London, Fox Archive, Parish Magazine of the Parish of St Augustine of Canterbury, Thorp Bay, May 1989.

¹³⁰ London, Fox Archive, Flyer for Concert at St Michael's, Roxwell, Hendon String Orchestra, Sunday 29 October 1989.

¹³¹ London, Fox Archive, Flyer for Grand Concert by Essex Police band, 24 September 1989.

¹³² London, Fox Archive, Flyer for St John the Baptist Danbury Sponsored Vigil and fast for Twenty Four Hours, undated c. 1989.

¹³³ London, Fox Archive, Letters, Richer to Anon, 27 July 1989.

¹³⁴ London, Fox Archive, Letter and Report from the Parishes in Hadleigh Deanery, 30 January 1989.

reservations about the ‘multi-faith’ nature of the fund.¹³⁵ A diocesan identity enabled people’s purse strings to loosen when a wider national identity and sense of responsibility could not.

The fundraising was to extend to corporate and other community organizations in the diocese. A celebrity football match was arranged at Leyton Orient’s grounds with enthusiastic clergy playing celebrities from *East Enders* as well as famous footballers.¹³⁶ Even the Bishop of Barking, Roger Sainsbury, played ‘extremely well’.¹³⁷ The likes of ‘Lofty’ (Tom Watts), Glen Hoddle, and Alan Comfort taking on the ex-Warden of the Mayflower indicated some measure of interest and influence the appeal could muster.¹³⁸

The diocese was reaching out beyond its traditional benefactors to seek new streams of funding and becoming more sophisticated in their fundraising. Local businesses such as International Paints were contacted about possible corporate sponsorship.¹³⁹ The central Church was offering support to the diocese in developing a professional approach to fundraising. This could be said to be new territory for many in the Church who were used to much more informal networking for relatively small appeals. A document dated January 1989 entitled: ‘Companies: How to Win their Support’ survives in the Archdeacon’s archives.¹⁴⁰ This was a lengthy and detailed document that was a far cry from the one page information sheet Stephen Lowe had to raise funds from for St Bartholomew’s.

Despite its poverty Newham Deanery was unwilling to accept charity and actively contributed to the Inner-city Appeal. The collection made at the dedication service of the new St Michael’s went to the Bishop’s Urban Fund.¹⁴¹ Some time later the parish was still giving money to the appeal, £400 in September 1989.¹⁴² Newham itself organized an

¹³⁵ London, Fox Archive, Article for Parish Magazine All Saints, Rayne, undated c. 1989.

¹³⁶ London, Fox Archive, Letters, Dalliston to Nick Berry, 6 June 1991.

¹³⁷ London, Fox Archive, Letters, Dalliston to Sainsbury, 6 June 1991.

¹³⁸ London, Fox Archive, Letters, Dalliston to Comfort, 6 June 1991, Stop Press Report.

¹³⁹ London, Fox Archive, Memo Seminar for Business, 12 April 1990.

¹⁴⁰ London, Fox Archive, Companies, How to Win their Support, January 1989.

¹⁴¹ London, SMLICA, Order of Service for the Dedication of St Michael’s Manor Park, 11 June 1990.

¹⁴² London, SMLICA, Minutes of St Michael’s PCC, 12 September 1989.

in-house conference on 14 June 1986 thanks to the efforts of Stephen Lowe and Martin Wallace. Speakers included the Archbishop's Advisor on UPAs, introducing the report. Subjects to be covered would include feedback on *Faith in the City*, social conditions, buildings, other faiths and ordained ministry.¹⁴³ Politically, this came at a significant point in the then Conservative Government's drive to encourage greater private partnership. Ironically, a report that was dismissively branded left wing by some in the party was actually fulfilling a central plank in the government's welfare policy of public, private partnership.

There was more rhetoric regarding lay leadership. It was felt that support had to be more than money; lay leadership was needed. The Rector of Little Ilford certainly encouraged his congregation to take an active part in supporting the community. He said that ministry from the top down was a thing of the past.¹⁴⁴ Commenting a year after the report was published John Whitwell indicated that the Church needed people who were alert and fired with the Spirit to respond to the issues raised in it.¹⁴⁵ These developments also inspired energetic Christians.

There was still a significant, active group of people who were not directly part of the local church but had connections with it and who were willing and able to offer support. John Whitwell recalls Phil Slade as an example, the husband of a devout member of the Church, who never attended St Michael's, but was their treasurer for many years.¹⁴⁶ This was the residue of those associational relationships that authors such as McLeod had seen of great significance in the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁷ They may not have been there in large numbers, but clergy, who spoke their language, could draw on the support of a wide range of local people who would never appear on a parish electoral roll.

¹⁴³ London, Fox Archive, Open Letter and Flyer, 23 May 1986.

¹⁴⁴ London, SMLICA, Minutes of St Michael's PCC, 27 February 1984.

¹⁴⁵ London, SMLICA, Summary of Rectors Report, 1986.

¹⁴⁶ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

¹⁴⁷ Hugh McLeod noted the many different ways that ordinary people shared in a Christian culture in the nineteenth century, by extension there was still much good will towards the Roman Catholic Church in the twentieth-century from those who would not willingly attend services. Hugh McLeod, *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City* (London: Croom Helm, 1974), p. 77.

St Michael's was a significant stage in these church community centres. St Bartholomew's took nearly a decade of hard work to be completed but St Michael's took less than half that time. Where it had to compromise in working in partnership with an outside agency, albeit a sympathetic one, it achieved its goals quickly, thanks to the substantial support of its partner and its own not inconsiderable assets.

What then did this building deliver? St Michael's connection with Aston offered a more professional attitude to community work as well as a healthy funding stream in Aston's financial reserves.¹⁴⁸ If their theology was not clearly expressed, their practical aim was a sense of community. This was echoed by John Whitwell in an article in their parish newsletter. The new church would be a point of gathering for all people in Manor Park.¹⁴⁹ St Michael's wanted to have a building that was a '...place of meeting for the whole community...' ¹⁵⁰ Both St Michael's and St Mark's, Beckton, actually had parts of their centres designed as, and called, 'the place of meeting'. Wide open spaces with coffee bars and seating aimed to invite the neighbourhood to drift into the centre and find a home there.¹⁵¹ St Bartholomew's was described by one commentator as bringing the street into the church and the church into the street.¹⁵²

St Michael's particularly wanted to draw closer to their Asian neighbours.¹⁵³ There seemed to be a genuine sense that it wanted to support all the people of Manor Park.¹⁵⁴ The Froud Centre hosted a Sai Baba community that worshipped regularly in the building. All the centres were happy to welcome people to join the myriad activities that took place on their sites regardless of faith. The churches felt that they could not be going

¹⁴⁸ For a fuller picture of Aston see Chapter Two on the settlements and missions.

¹⁴⁹ London, SMLICA, Little Ilford News, September 1987.

¹⁵⁰ London, SMLICA, Little Ilford News, September 1989.

¹⁵¹ One could argue this was an attempt to recreate the character of an old East London street where neighbours could chat to each other over garden fences. In the absence of such communities due to depopulation and fluid communities these places of meeting sought to fill this gap with their own safe spaces.

¹⁵² Jane Garnett and Alana Harris, 'Sources of the Sacred: Migration, Modernity and Religious Identity' in *Oxford Historian: A magazine of the Faculty of History for Oxford Historians* Vol. VII (the Faculty of History Oxford University, 2009), pp. 16-20, p. 17.

¹⁵³ London, SMLICA, Summary of Rectors Report, 1987.

¹⁵⁴ London, SMLICA, St Michael's Church and the Aston Centre: An outline Summary of the Background to the Development Taking Place on the Site of St Michael's Church, Romford Road Manor Park, May 1989.

far wrong if their sites were well used. St Michael's appeared quite unclear how the community side of the building would operate but was enthusiastic about the fact it would remain open from eight in the morning till ten at night.¹⁵⁵

As deceptive as overplaying the role of numbers has become in measuring church success, a disconcerting reality for supporters of secularization in the urban context was that these churches did grow numerically.¹⁵⁶ An open and welcoming approach, John Whitwell hoped, would reap its own rewards and that reaching out to the community would bring new life rather than death.¹⁵⁷ The new St Michael's drew in additional members, one particular person, Joan Clent, discovering a fresh vocation after working with Albert Schweitzer in Lambaréné.¹⁵⁸ John Whitwell's hopes for the future of the new centre were mission orientated: 'I look upon the redevelopment scheme and its possibilities as a tremendous advance in proclaiming Good News to Newham and Manor Park.'¹⁵⁹ The new manager of the Froud Centre hoped the building would '...reverse the trend away from Church by the example of our faith and commitment...'¹⁶⁰ A Newham Deanery plan indicated that in 1984 St Michael's main Sunday services attendance was about fifty-one. By 1989, on the eve of the opening of the new centre St Michael's Electoral Roll stood at 121 in comparison with its near neighbours of St Barnabas', Manor Park, which was eighty-four and All Saint's, Forest Gate which was forty.¹⁶¹

St Michael's chose to use the ancient parish church of St Mary, Little Ilford, as their temporary worship space and thus for them this transition area was not as experimental as other projects. Fellowship House and the medical centre St Mark's used had been useful experimental spaces. Realistically, St Mary's was far too small a building to accommodate the St Michael's congregation so the new centre actually felt more comfortable and spacious.

¹⁵⁵ London, SMLICA, Minutes of St Michael's PCC, 13 March 1990.

¹⁵⁶ London, SMLICA, Minutes the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Michael's, 22 March 1992.

¹⁵⁷ London, SMLICA, Minutes the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Michael's, 24 March 1985.

¹⁵⁸ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

¹⁵⁹ London, SMLICA, Minutes the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Michael's, 24 March 1985.

¹⁶⁰ London, SMLICA, Minutes of St Michael's PCC 13 March 1990.

¹⁶¹ *Diocese of Chelmsford Year Book 1989/90* Seventy-Fifth Year of Issue (Privately Published), p. 123.

Churches believed they were now planning for the future mission of the Church rather than simply reacting to present problems. It was hoped that the new building at St Michael's would be able to meet the needs of people for the next fifty years.¹⁶² They created attractive centres that were open far more than their predecessors, played their part in stimulating growth in adherents, and were lavished with funding from church and secular agencies. Speaking for his own development but echoing what could be said for them all John Whitwell said St Michael's '...put flesh on the bone that everyone thought was dead and buried!'¹⁶³

With the growing cultural diversity came the need for worship spaces to accommodate different expressions of Christianity. Here at least Newham Anglicans were happy to open their doors to these new churches as a source of revenue. This was positively encouraged by the diocese and deanery in the mid-1980s.¹⁶⁴ St Michael's was used by a French speaking church in the early 1990s.¹⁶⁵ Newham was being transformed from one of the least overtly Christian parts of the country to one of its most vibrant and expressive. A long trend in decline in the inner-city seemed to be slowing down if not actually reversing. Resources that the inner-city could only dream of in the late 1970s were a reality by the mid-1980s. Far from abandoning the inner-city the Church was willing to use it once again as the symbol of its fight back from indifference and redundancy. Bishop John Waine felt that the work carried out by the Church was a 'sign of our growing confidence...' [As Christians] 'The tide is really turning. We are no longer in retreat in the tough urban areas.'¹⁶⁶

A similar catalogue of activities was taking place at St Michael's. There was a breadth and variety of work that echoed those of the old missions and settlements. St Michael's had a parents' and toddlers' group, women's keep fit, and a Saturday club for 7-11 year

¹⁶² London, SMLICA, Little Ilford News, September 1989.

¹⁶³ London, SMLICA, Minutes the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Michael's, 8 April 1984.

¹⁶⁴ London, SMLICA, Report of Director of Planning and Architecture, Planning and Redevelopment Committee, 17 June 1985.

¹⁶⁵ London, SMLICA, Minutes the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Michael's, 22 March 1992.

¹⁶⁶ London, Fox Archive, Press Bulletin c 1988.

olds.¹⁶⁷ A family care project was developing at the Froud by October 1991.¹⁶⁸ The centre was open Christmas day to serve lunch to the elderly.¹⁶⁹ Its office was rented to a Somali Refugee group and Newham Mind.¹⁷⁰ The borough was able to use the Froud Centre as an emergency housing centre during a cold spell.¹⁷¹ The diocese itself would also use these buildings for their own projects. St Michael's rented their parish office to the Bishop of Barking who used the Froud Centre as his base for a time.¹⁷²

A further aim for St Michael's new site was to be able to worship in a more inspiring way.¹⁷³ John Whitwell stated he wanted the new church to be a place; '...in which the liturgy could be celebrated with some sort of panache and splendour...'¹⁷⁴ This was echoed again at the completion of the project when it was recorded in the minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, 'if the worship is beautiful, meaningful, relevant and attractive folk will come back for more...'¹⁷⁵ Personal spiritual development was also important. Little Ilford clergy and laity met every day to say morning and evening prayer, dividing their time between the new and ancient churches. There was a list of every road in the parish that formed an internal prayer cycle. St Michael's was echoing Wesley Carr's book, 'saying one' for every home in the parish.¹⁷⁶ Churches were remaining faithful not just to a pastoral, but spiritual role in the community.

Attitudes towards those who were to work in the area were altering. Stephen Lowe had actively had to seek out support for managing a team and working in the urban context; now there were a growing number of projects that aimed to support new ministers in Newham. For those who had never worked in East London or with the urban working-class there was a recognition they had to listen and learn from this community. When Graham Routley was appointed the first warden of the Froud Centre he spoke to a group

¹⁶⁷ London, SMLICA, Little Ilford News, January 1991.

¹⁶⁸ London, SMLICA, Little Ilford News, October 1991.

¹⁶⁹ London, SMLICA, Little Ilford News, December 1991.

¹⁷⁰ London, SMLICA, Minutes the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Michael's, 22 March 1992.

¹⁷¹ London, SMLICA, Minutes of St Michael's PCC, 17 March 1991.

¹⁷² London, SMLICA, Letters, Whitwell to Sainsbury, 16 January 1991.

¹⁷³ London, SMLICA, Little Ilford New, September 1987.

¹⁷⁴ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

¹⁷⁵ London, SMLICA, Minutes The Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Michael's, 25 March 1990.

¹⁷⁶ Wesley Carr, *Say One For Me, The Church of England in the Next Decade* (London: SPCK, 1992)

of the St Michael's congregation asking for their support as he had never lived and worked in London before.¹⁷⁷ This acknowledgment, that church workers had to learn from their communities, also manifested itself in creating training programmes. In an attempt to bridge the gap between understanding and experience the Newham Renewal Programme had been running, for a number of years, a residential induction course into life in East London. This aimed to support clergy and lay workers who had recently moved to the borough.¹⁷⁸ They developed a link with the Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges and regularly took students on placement. The first curate of the new St Michael's gained his initial experiences of Newham life by residing for a fortnight in the home of a Manor Park resident.

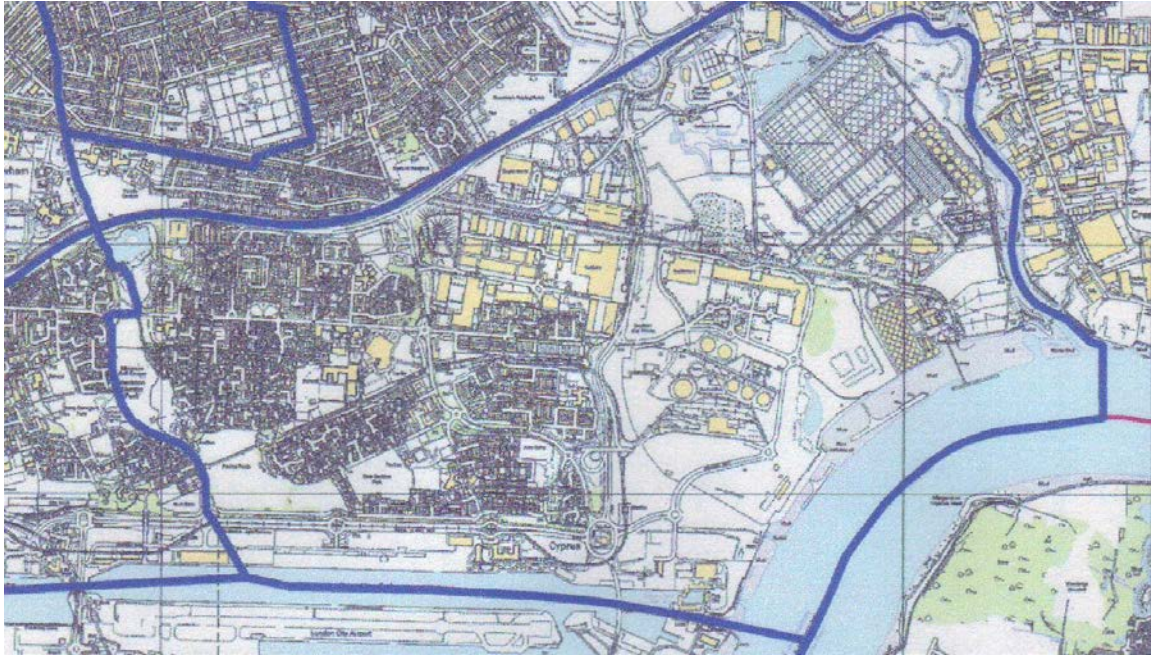
St Michael's reflects a further stage on in these developments. What it lacked in concrete theology behind the project it made up for in the energy and speed with which the project was achieved. It was a new context, a more multi-cultural borough and one that was gaining from the influence and income of the Church Urban Fund. Alongside the change in population Newham was one of the growing number of enterprise zones springing up in what were considered derelict inner-city areas. These zones were managed through quasi-autonomous non-governmental organizations and the quango had come to Newham. In the case of Beckton, they were to see a revolution in building and population. The Church of England in Beckton was actively encouraged to develop a community project by the local authority. As a grass-roots organization it was felt it could deliver much-needed resource in this new town.

¹⁷⁷ London, SMLICA, Minutes of St Michael's PCC, 16 January 1990.

¹⁷⁸ London, Fox Archive, Notice Board, December 1989.

St Mark's, Beckton

Beckton is an area in the south east corner of Newham bounded by the Royal Docks on the south and the London borough of Barking and Dagenham to the east (Map 4.3).



Map 4. 3. The boundaries of the parish of Beckton.

Source: Chelmsford Diocesan Office.

This parish is bounded on the north by the East Ham Team Ministry and to the east by the Deanery of Barking and Dagenham. Their near neighbour to the south is the parish of St John's, North Woolwich and to the west the parish of the Ascension, Victoria Docks. It was formed out of a major industrial site, the Beckton Gas Works and much of its housing is less than thirty years old.

To its west were the communities of Silvertown and Canning Town. The A13 forms a significant barrier to East Ham on its northern edge creating a sense of separation with the rest of the borough. Its name is derived from Simon Adams Beck one of the principal investors in the Gas, Light and Coke Company who settled in this uninhabited area of marshy field in 1868. Beckton was to become the largest manufacturer of coal gas in the world until the advent of North Sea gas made the whole plant redundant.¹⁷⁹ It closed in the 1970s.¹⁸⁰ St Mark's technically replaced the parish church of St Michael's which had been destroyed during the Blitz and not replaced. In 1981 the land was controlled by the Conservative Government's London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC).¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Jerry White, *London in the Twentieth-century: A City and Its People* (London: Penguin 2002), p. 179.

¹⁸⁰ White, *London in the Twentieth-century*, p. 206.

¹⁸¹ White, *London in the Twentieth-century*, p. 77f.

Its only other claim to fame was the use of its abandoned industrial buildings as a stage set for the Stanley Kubrick Vietnam war film *Full Metal Jacket*. This was the context in which St Mark's Church, Beckton was to be built. Significantly for the development, there was no substantial community left in Beckton at this time and although a temporary church was established it was a portakabin with less than twenty regular worshippers. Alec Kellaway, who moved there in 1984, described it as little more than a building site. It was technically part of the East Ham Team ministry but felt a separate community with few connections with the town-centre divided by the A13.¹⁸² Don Jones, the first priest in the new St Mark's, went further and described Beckton as a 'frontier town. Wild Westish... new buildings going up left right and centre...' ¹⁸³

Beckton was to be a significant test for Chelmsford Diocese and Newham Deanery. The Church of England was confident enough to launch a Church in the emerging community around Beckton. It was to be a brand new building, in a community that was only a few years old. This was also a rapidly changing landscape both physically, with an enormous building scheme, and through a shifting population. The Church's relevance could be judged by its impact on the community. The fate of the Church of England in the early 1980s could be measured through the success or failure of this church's ability to survive. What became evident was that the diocese was using this model of redevelopment and renewal as a blanket response to the inner-city. It was the problems with this development that were to call a halt to any further substantial project in Newham.

St Mark's, Beckton's, antecedence reaches further back in Newham's history when a new church for Beckton was proposed in the early 1970s. As early as 1980 the council identified that the churches were willing to work together and provide a worship and community space.¹⁸⁴ It was in the wake of *Faith in the City* that the vision became a reality. It was the Church Urban Fund that was to provide the substantial grant needed to fulfil the Church's obligation in creating the complex. From the 1970s the major denominations in Newham had established an ecumenical Beckton group that met to

¹⁸² Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

¹⁸³ Interview, Jones, 22 August 2011.

¹⁸⁴ Anon, *The Beckton District Plan* (London Borough of Newham, 1980), p. 56.

discuss the future resourcing of this area by Christians. Stephen Lowe was invited by the head of the Renewal Programme, Paul Regan, to be involved in the discussions regarding the future of Beckton that later developed into St Mark's.¹⁸⁵ By the late 1980s plans for a new church and community centre were well under way. Alec Kellaway, who was to become the Lay Reader at St Mark's, believed that the principal reason for the redevelopment was to return a strong Anglican presence into this expanding community.¹⁸⁶ Here, at least, the Church felt that it was vital for them to stake a claim in the new residential area that was developing. Anglican identity demanded a base in the heart of this community rather than expecting its surrounding churches to take up the provision. Strategically this was not to be an independent venture by the Anglicans. It was a test of ecumenical relations and the worship site created would have to accommodate several denominations' needs. There was no existing plant to demolish so this would be a blank canvas for Christians in this new development. However, this lack of community-involvement proved a sizeable impediment in achieving a realistic vision.

When it came to who was to be the lead agent in achieving this goal St Mark's ran into the first substantial problem. There were no clergy based in Beckton who could be called upon to take responsibility. The last minister of the portakabin, the only Anglican worship site, was Jan Cotman and he had left East Ham in 1985. Stephen Lowe, as the leading Anglican on church redevelopment, was the natural choice as manager of the project. The problem, as Lowe admitted in interview, was that he simply did not have the time and energy to put into such a scheme. Don Jones succeeded Cotman as priest in charge, but did not arrive until 1988 when the scheme was well under way and it was in this year Stephen Lowe was appointed Archdeacon of Sheffield. Unlike the other projects that had experienced and established clergy and congregations much of the planning made certain assumptions about what was achievable in terms of finance, volunteers and revenue that were to prove illusory. It was to mean that very rapidly St Mark's, Beckton,

¹⁸⁵ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Letters, Regan to Lowe, 20 October 1981.

¹⁸⁶ Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

gained a reputation as a liability, a community development that had over reached the abilities of the local churches.¹⁸⁷

St Mark's was the only local ecumenical project in Newham in the 1980s. It was a partnership between the Anglicans, Methodist, United Reformed and Roman Catholic Churches.¹⁸⁸ It had been fostered by the then Rural Dean, Barry Lloyd and Stephen Lowe, building on his experience of ecumenical teamwork in Birmingham. Lowe had wanted the St Bartholomew's project to be ecumenical and this had failed to materialize, Beckton was to be a second opportunity.¹⁸⁹ Nationally, there was much hope around the ecumenical movement at the time when the final ARCIC report was published that optimistically believed it '...represented a significant stage in relations between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church.'¹⁹⁰ New ecumenical collaborations could be initiated that did not mean an end to diversity and allowed a more respectful approach to other denominations' traditions.¹⁹¹ This meant that denominations were more confident in sharing resource and maintaining separate identities. There was a growing emphasises that dialogue was the recognition that the Church was called to serve the world and this was an aspect of the Church all denominations could fruitfully participate in together, particularly in such a disadvantaged borough as Newham.¹⁹²

This collaboration again was not achieved without some conflict at times. Beckton Anglicans struggled to work alongside ministers from other denominations.¹⁹³ Whether this was rooted in ecclesiology or simply personality clashes it was unclear. Structurally, it faced criticism from a report in 1983 that felt the ecumenical management of such

¹⁸⁷ Interview, Wallace, 25 July 2011.

¹⁸⁸ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Minutes, Newham Churches Docklands Group, 25 September 1981.

¹⁸⁹ Chelmsford, ECRO, A11221. Box 2, Minutes, Newham Churches Docklands Group, 13 April 1981.

¹⁹⁰ Anon, *The Final Report Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission* (London: SPCK, 1982), p. 99.

¹⁹¹ Walter Bildstein, 'Protestant-Catholic Engagement: The Case of the World Council of Churches Joint Working Group', in *Inter-faith Dialogue: Four Approaches* ed. by John W. Miller (Ontario: University of Waterloo Press, 1986), pp. 53-70, p. 65.

¹⁹² Bildstein, 'Protestant-Catholic Engagement', p. 66.

¹⁹³ London, Fox Archive, Letters, Bolton and Emms to Sainsbury, 30 November 1998.

schemes was very bureaucratic.¹⁹⁴ Ironically, as there was no single lead agent, St Mark's was to suffer from a plethora of competing voices due to the numerous ecumenical partners all wishing to claim some stake in managing the building. Alec Kellaway recalled the many layers of multi-denominational administration involved in running the church and centre.¹⁹⁵ St Mark's, Beckton, was managed by three different groups in Alec Kellaway's time: from the YMCA, a local Baptist church, and a Roman Catholic charity.¹⁹⁶ This bureaucracy and outside interference distracted the local church and highlighted the challenge of forging a common identity out of such disparate traditions.

Given that there was little direct local leadership, how then did this project actually come to fruition? The Beckton development came at a strategic point in the development of the whole docklands area. The LDDC had chosen to develop this area last. This meant that the St Bartholomew's collaboration with the Council and Health Service was completed and proving that such ventures could work. The LDDC offered a significant partnership between the local churches and the Corporation by allowing the church to become the managers of the public aspect of the development, financed by public funds. St Mark's, Beckton, received a million pounds from the LDDC for the community side of St Mark's.¹⁹⁷ Alongside this substantial grant St Mark's, Beckton received considerable patronage from Newham Council who owned the land that was to be built on. The sale of the land was negotiated at a reduced community rate.¹⁹⁸ A great deal of responsibility and trust was being placed in the hands of the Church of England at this time. There was a sense that as a grass-roots organization it could best manage the project for local people and was sufficiently valued and trusted. This was evident in the willingness of the Council to negotiate with the churches in Beckton.¹⁹⁹

As an ecumenical project, funding for parts of the building came from the partner denominations. Finance was also available through the Church Urban Fund. It had come

¹⁹⁴ London, Fox Archive, Chelmsford Cathedral Examination of Local Ecumenical Projects, undated.

¹⁹⁵ Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

¹⁹⁶ Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

¹⁹⁷ Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

¹⁹⁸ Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

¹⁹⁹ Anon, *The Beckton District Plan* (London Borough of Newham, 1980), p. 56.

too late for the St Bartholomew's, East Ham and St Mark's, Forest Gate, developments but it proved invaluable to St Mark's, Beckton. However, money was to become a substantial problem for St Mark's in the intervening years. Unlike the other developments which simply required core funding for construction, St Mark's was a much more ambitious project that needed revenue funding for salaries. St Mark's had a large staff including a centre manager, administrative staff, youth workers, health workers and children's workers, and a community development worker. There was some funding initially from the LDDC but it was felt their attentions were moving on to other projects. Unlike St Michael's, which could rely on the funds from Aston Charities, St Mark's was expected to find these resources on their own. This was at a time when such projects were increasingly set within a competitive market and with little training offered to the clergy. Where people like Lowe thrived on such a challenge others seemed to be bowed down by it.

This sustained funding was to prove to be a significant burden for those who managed the projects as Don Jones attested.²⁰⁰ He felt that the project had been flawed from the start. In the case of St Bartholomew's it was clear that much work had been done in securing a diverse range of revenue streams, from private rents, the Council, Housing Association and the doctors surgery. This had simply not been the case at St Mark's, Beckton. Jones felt that unless there was a substantial income regularly guaranteed the venture was too fragile to succeed.²⁰¹ The problem lay in continuity, as many of the sources of funding were by their nature short-lived, LDDC was not expected to exist for ever and nor was the CUF. St Mark's, Beckton, obtained revenue for a neighbourhood worker but this was for a limited period.²⁰² Coupled with this was the unwillingness for grants to be awarded for existing work, innovation given a priority. This meant that many of these projects were expected to reinvent themselves or change their targets.

²⁰⁰ Interview, Jones, 22 August 2011.

²⁰¹ Interview, Jones, 22 August 2011.

²⁰² London, Fox Archive, Draft Document as part of the Bishop of Chelmsford's Inner-city Appeal, undated.

Nor did these new buildings always solve the problem of economy. The heating system in the new St Mark's, Beckton, was so prohibitively expensive to run they had to replace it within a few years of opening.²⁰³ Design was often blamed for these mistakes as in the case of one of the principal features of St Mark's, an indoor street. This was a public path that led from the main road into the shopping area of Beckton that ran directly through the centre.²⁰⁴ These later buildings were often to create security issues rather than solve them.²⁰⁵ Ironically, the main thoroughfare through St Mark's was there to encourage people to enter the building; it quickly became a source of disquiet for the church, as it was impossible to ensure security in other parts of the site when it was operating.²⁰⁶ It became difficult to offer different groups space at the same time. The sports hall, what was once thought of as one of the prime assets of the building was quickly identified as an under-used space.²⁰⁷

All of these issues were exacerbated by the Byzantine feel to the management of the complex as each individual denomination had to be consulted when any substantial decision was made. This was not a feature that the other projects faced. St Bartholomew's and St Mark's managed their own buildings, St Michael's managed its part of the site and Aston Charities theirs. With no apparent overall lead agent St Mark's, in its early years, faced a barrage of competing agendas that made decision making difficult.²⁰⁸

There was also recognition that community development was not the brief of every clergyperson. Given the complaint that Stephen Lowe made when he first came to St Bartholomew's that he was expected to manage too many buildings, Don Jones commented that he felt like a 'glorified estate agent' when having to deal with the

²⁰³ Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

²⁰⁴ One could argue this was an attempt to recreate the character of an old East London street where neighbours could chat to each other over garden fences. In the absence of such communities due to depopulation and fluid communities these places of meeting sought to fill this gap with their own safe spaces.

²⁰⁵ St Michael's, Little Ilford was to face just such problems with its 'place of meeting'.

²⁰⁶ Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

²⁰⁷ This was also an issue for the St Michael's/Froud Centre as its sports hall was too expensive to rent out and few groups were willing to hire it.

²⁰⁸ Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

complexity of St Mark's.²⁰⁹ Clearly, some clergy felt their role and training had concentrated their gifts in ministering to a church not a community centre.²¹⁰

The problems that dogged the building from its opening certainly coloured many people's perceptions of the new Church but there is strong evidence that there was much successful and important community work carried out in the building that offered an alternative narrative. The Annual Report for St Mark's 1996-97 spoke of two thousand visitors to the centre each week. As the Director wrote in his report: 'A wonderful mix of cultures spanning the entire age range.'²¹¹ There were a wide range of recreational, educational and sporting activities on offer in the centre. Agencies that were included in the report were the children and Families Support Worker, the Beckton youth Project. St Mark's Women's Group, a health programme, play group, Traidcraft Shop, and a project to support the victims of domestic abuse.²¹² St Mark's, Beckton, also became the office for the Church Urban Fund in Chelmsford Diocese with an administrative staff of three. Newham now could be an active resource for the wider church rather than a drain on its time, skills and money. Whatever the problems encountered by the management, the evidence suggested that the centre was meeting a genuine need in the community and offering aid to many disadvantaged people.

St Mark's Anglican and Free Church congregations were firmly on the Evangelical wing of the church. This had meant they found collaboration with other faith communities difficult. By the late 1990s St Mark's, Beckton's lack of involvement with other faith communities was drawing outside criticism.²¹³ The reality was that in such a highly diverse borough it would be unthinkable that these new developments would not have a multi-cultural and multi-faith dimension to them.²¹⁴ This was to change over the years as Alec Kellaway recalled the small barriers that were broken down when Muslim

²⁰⁹ Interview, Jones, 22 August 2011.

²¹⁰ Interview, Jones, 22 August 2011.

²¹¹ London, Fox Archive, St Mark's, Beckton Community Roots: Annual Report 1996-1997. p. 1.

²¹² London, Fox Archive, St Mark's, Beckton Community Roots: Annual Report 1996-1997. p. 4ff.

²¹³ London, Fox Archive, this is an extract from a proposed MA thesis by Clare Maybury for Goldsmiths College but there seems to be no record of it being submitted.

²¹⁴ London, SMLICA, Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Michael's, 22 March 1992.

colleagues visited St Mark's, Beckton and discovered shared values with the Church.²¹⁵ Don Jones early life had been spent in Agha Jari in Southern Iran and he felt confident in working in a multi-faith community.²¹⁶ Simplicity of worship, devotion to a book, and a conservative approach to life meant Evangelicals and Muslims could find a shared approach to religion.

Perhaps one of the most substantial omissions in the development process was any clear theology that underpinned the project. St Bartholomew's leadership had worked hard to instruct the laity offering a wider theological vision and drawing heavily on the writings of J. G. Davies. This sense that theology was a vital part of the process seemed to have been all but lost in the final development of St Mark's, Beckton. One of the significant challenges was an inability to express a sense of God's presence independently of Christian work in the centre. Unlike the theology that underpinned the St Bartholomew's development and to some extent the assumptions behind St Michael's there was little sense that God was active in the world independently of Christians. This may have been, in part due to St Mark's Evangelical roots that stressed holiness as an individual rather than corporate experience. Thus the work of the community centre was difficult to absorb into their theology. It was either seen as a means of raising revenue for the church, or a step towards conversion. In interview Alan Bright struggled to see beyond these aims to a wider vision of service and theology.²¹⁷ This was a less integrated approach than that of St Mark's, Forest Gate. More mundanely speed was felt to be of the essence as the LDDC funding could only be offered for a limited time. It seemed that exploring its theology was a luxury that St Mark's could ill afford. There was also the reality that at the beginning of Beckton's scheme there was no population to develop a theology in. Unlike the other projects St Mark's was a completely blank canvas.

On a more positive note worship, a core activity of the church and a significant measure of the vitality of a congregation, was described as enriching. St Mark's, Beckton, as a Local Ecumenical Project (LEP) had to accommodate not just liturgical renewal but a

²¹⁵ Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

²¹⁶ Interview, Jones, 22 August 2011.

²¹⁷ Interview, Bright, 8 August 2011.

variety of denominational approaches to worship. Even this liturgical mix produced worship that drew people into the building and fulfilled their needs. Again Alec Kellaway felt that worship at St Mark's, Beckton, was always inspirational, broadly Evangelical with a strong musical component.²¹⁸ Despite the pitfalls of financial constraint and the complexity of the bureaucracy of managing the building the church grew. In the late 1990s the congregation at St Mark's, Beckton, had risen to sixty adults and thirty-five children from the Anglicans and Free Church congregation and about two hundred for the Roman Catholic community.²¹⁹ Even in the midst of such problems a church could thrive.

Conclusion

For nearly two decades after the opening of the St Bartholomew's Church and Centre Christians in Newham were to enthusiastically embrace this fresh approach to church development. Clearly this model of urban renewal was seen as very successful by the deanery and diocese. At a point at which it was too easy to assume the Church was irrelevant, it was able to make a significant impact on its local community. It could still draw in substantial funds for redevelopment and now foster partnerships with powerful allies like Aston Charities and new funding bodies like the LDDC. Moreover, these approaches transcended traditional ecclesiastical traditions as both Evangelical churches like St Mark's, Forest Gate and Liberal Catholic parishes like St Michael's, Little Ilford, both adapted their premises for community use. An articulate and evident theology, which was a mark of developments like St Bartholomew's and St Mark's struggled to be visible in later developments, but this did not mean it was entirely absent. Most significantly, the publication of *Faith in the City* seemed both inspirational and prophetic for such projects. It gave permission for St Michael's to take the dramatic step of pulling down its old church and gave financial backing to the new parish of St Mark's, Beckton. It inspired a diocese to galvanise itself into action to raise a considerable sum to support its ailing, urban neighbours. It brought together very different communities to collaborate in meeting a common goal.

²¹⁸ Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

²¹⁹ London, Fox Archive, St Mark's Church and Community Centre Annual Report 1997-98.

As successive governments articulated support for the voluntary sector, Newham churches benefitted from this. Churches were willing to sacrifice old icons and cherished powers in a bid to retain a place in the community and a voice that would be listened to. The guiding hand of St Bartholomew's was evident in all three of these developments. Yet this was not a slavish response; new contexts such as the growing issue of immigration meant churches adapted this vision but still wanted to welcome and include all their parishioners. Stephen Lowe was not the only maverick in the deanery and it was apparent Newham attracted creative church leaders; hardly confirmation the inner-city was a backwater. Given the energy and activity evident in the Diocese of Chelmsford the Church of England could hardly be seen as redundant. Indeed the diocese itself quickly adapted to encourage and support such ventures. Even where the Church found large projects difficult to manage effectively, places like Beckton were valued and needed. The evidences of busy community buildings and worship spaces that could be transformed for large or small groups was an indication of success. Worship that was enriching and meaningful was a clear spiritual result of such adaptation. The question would now arise; how did the decades after their development shape them? What would be the fate of such projects by 2010?

Chapter Five:

Survival and change: Newham churches 1990-2010

Introduction

In this chapter we will look at how these church and community centre developments have survived and changed in the following decades. British society and Newham in particular have altered in the thirty years since these projects were initiated. Assessing how they have developed in this time would be an indicator of how realistic and achievable their original visions and goals were.

The questions are as follows. First, what hopes and aspirations did they set themselves and what evidence was there that they met these objectives? This will mean covering the areas of openness and welcome, inclusion, relevance, renewed role, and use by the community. Second, what evidence was there that these projects were sustainable, and had held on to their original theological approach? Third, on the most basic indices of achievement (retaining adherents, financial security, identity, image and optimism) how could these buildings be classed as a success in the face of secularization? Fourth, what impact have they had on the Church at large, through the literature they inspired and churches that have followed in their footsteps? Finally, how have two old competitors to Church fared in the changing world of Newham, namely the pub and cinema?

Have their hopes and aspirations been fulfilled?

A significant measure of how these buildings have adapted their original vision will be to compare the hopes and aspirations of those who developed these church community centres and examine how far these were fulfilled. Four aspirations reflect something of these churches' original vision: openness, halt in decline, relevance to Newham residents and financial stability.

It would be helpful to remind ourselves of the challenges they faced as outlined in Chapters Three and Four and to assess how successful they were in fulfilling their

aspirations. The 1970s were felt to be the low point in the life of the Church of England in Newham, as was evident from interviews and reports in the *Newham Recorder*.¹ There were gloomy predictions that the parish system would collapse if the rate of decline was not checked. Churches were under used and Christian influence was diminishing, particularly in the light of an increasingly secular identity amongst white British communities. The old denominations faced competition from a committed black and Asian culture that was rooted in new faiths and denominations.² The Church wanted to respond to the needs of the borough but felt frustrated that it was fighting for its own survival.

The image of bleakness and redundancy that the former sites engendered was stark. St Bartholomew's was a barn of a building that had to be closed most days of the week for fear of theft and vandalism. St Mark's, Forest Gate, was built in a piecemeal way, meaning that there was little relationship between one room on the site to its neighbour. St Michael's was felt to be all but redundant and, unless drastic action was taken, there would be little justification for maintaining such a useless complex of buildings. The old St Mark's, Beckton, site, although small and temporary, was hardly useful for much more than worship on a Sunday. It is telling that there was a growing perception that the gulf between rich and poor was increasing in the 1980s.³ This was also something of an age of despondence nationally as economic recession led to conservative reaction.

It was felt by those who built them, that these buildings offered an opportunity for a new mission to the community. Two underused assets, the land and buildings of these churches could once again be employed to serve the people of Newham. The missions

¹ In one year, 1972, the *Newham Recorder* noted the Anglican church lost one of its parish priests because he could not cope with the paganism of his parish, 20 January, p. 1. It had to grapple with financial crisis, 20 January, p. 54. It was to face a major shake up of its twenty two churches, 27 April, p. 58. It was asked to allow redundant churches to be converted into places of worship for other faiths, 24 October, p. 56. It needed to change or die, 23 November, p. 58.

² John Wolfe, 'Religion and Secularisation', in *Twentieth-century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change*, ed. by Paul Johnson, Francesca Carnevali and Julie-Marie Strange 2 edn, (Harlow: Longman, 2007), pp. 323-338, p. 331.

³ Joan C. Brown, 'Poverty in Post-war Britain', in *Understanding Post-war British Society* ed. by James Obelkevich, (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 116-127, p. 123.

and settlements had carved a niche in community work in the borough; these developments could equally find new roles within the district.

One aim that was almost universally expressed was the wish that these buildings could remain open for more than an hour a week on a Sunday. The frustration of all the leading players was that the original buildings were no longer fit for the purpose of Christian mission in the inner-city.⁴ One transparent way that the new buildings have achieved their aims is the welcome they offer to a vast number of Newham residents each week. The coffee bar at St Bartholomew's was for Anne Cross a safe space for people to feel included.⁵

There was a noteworthy contrast between the old site and the new, with an instant measure of success being their accessible nature. Their buildings remained open and secure for many more hours in a day than previously. There was delight from Simon Law, the Lay Reader at St Mark's, that in Forest Gate he could pass the new building at almost any time of day or night and discover it accessible, busy and welcoming.⁶

The buildings had been transformed by opening their sites up to a wide range of different activities. This diversity of activity speaks volumes about how genuinely welcome and inclusive a church was.⁷ There was evidence that these buildings were playing a significant role in enriching the community life of their particular parts of Newham.⁸ The church was once again opening its doors to the community and they were willing to enter in. This gave Anglicans a new lease of life in Newham when it would be expected this church was in its death throes.

⁴ Interview, Kemp, 15 August 2011.

⁵ Interview, Cross, 26 August 2011.

⁶ Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

⁷ Richard Giles, *Re-pitching the Tent: The Definitive Guide to Reordering your Church* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2004), p. 67.

⁸ One project that many of these centres was actively involved in was a Night Shelter run each evening during the winter months to care for the homeless of the borough. *Newham Recorder*, 16 December 1998, p. 28.

Some thirty years on, that original vision by their founders, of a well used building, was for many fulfilled. An obvious example of this was the coffee bar that both St Bartholomew's and St Mark's, Beckton, run on a daily basis. These instantly offered a sense of a busy, friendly welcome to visitors. They provided a community hub for many who use the buildings and afforded a safe space to sit and greet people, a space that their own streets and neighbourhoods might no longer afford. One of the earliest criticisms levelled at these centres was their inability to reach out into the wider community.⁹ With the population movements in the borough, community centres could be points of relative calm for those looking for a sense of community. In an age when society was felt to be breaking down and neighbours were strangers, these arenas offered a vibrant alternative space.¹⁰ Their open places of meeting took on the feel of old neighbourhoods and at their best were a melting pot of social groups, genders, races and ages. In reality these centres were not taking something out of the community, but aspired to putting something, once lost, back in, namely the sense of safety to socialize as neighbours.¹¹

There was a welcome not just into the community activities of these sites but also the church space itself. One of the most successful aspects of these projects could be said to have been their openness to people of all faiths and none to use the quiet spaces of the churches, to think or pray.¹² This was an all-encompassing approach to mission that saw the incarnation as a sanctification of all humanity.¹³ This was a contrast to the chilly inaccessibility of their predecessors. There was evidence that a wide variety of people accessed these spaces, reflected on the stillness, and lit a candle that belies the secular nature of much modern life. In turn the centres struggled to blend community life appropriately with these spiritual resources. How could they sensitively advertise prayer, and bleed the sacred into the community dimensions of their buildings without it feeling staged or clumsy?

⁹ W. J. Grisbrooke, 'The Multi-Purpose Church: A Critical Consideration', in *Research Bulletin* (Birmingham: Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture, 1968), pp. 72-80, p. 78.

¹⁰ J. G. Davies, 'The Multi-Purpose Church: A Clarification', in *Research Bulletin* (Birmingham: Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture, 1969), pp. 47-52, p. 48.

¹¹ Evidence of which is the names they gave to their open spaces such as 'the place of meeting' (St Michael's), or 'the street' (St Mark's, Forest Gate).

¹² Interview, Freeman, 13 June 2012.

¹³ Brian Frost, *The Secular in the Sacred* (Norfolk: Galliard, 1972), p. 42.

Linked to welcome was a sense that the Church should be inclusive of all its neighbours. The nature of the borough was changing from a white working class to a multi-faith and multi-cultural community. London reflects the diversity of the world.¹⁴ This could have been seen as a problem, and indeed it has not been without its challenges, but it has made Newham a place of real dynamism that had energized the Church. A further aim articulated particularly by St Michael's, but again evident in other centres, was the wish that these sites be as inclusive as possible. Perhaps the best evidence for this was the multi-racial nature of their congregations. All those who were interviewed recognized that the make-up of their Christian communities had changed and in many cases grown because of the faith of newcomers.¹⁵ However, the centres themselves had also undergone substantial changes because of population shifts. The Asian Women's Project, a pioneering venture in its day, outgrew St Bartholomew's. The work of the individual organizations that use the building all reflected a multi-cultural population and one that no longer feels on the margins of Newham life. This integration was noted by Garnett and Harris in their recent research at St Bartholomew's. The sheer diversity of peoples who meet at the centre enabled people to feel at ease.¹⁶ Youth and children's activities strongly reflected the diversity of the area, and St Mark's, Forest Gate, ran its nursery predominantly for the children of Muslim parents.¹⁷ A chess club at St Mark's, Beckton, that was supported by the Lay Reader, Alan Bright, meant he was able to meet with young Muslims.¹⁸ A community project for young Muslims at St Michael's invited Brian Lewis, the Rector of Little Ilford, to talk about his faith.¹⁹ All the centres had admitted that it would be impossible to run many activities in their buildings that did not reflect the multi-stranded nature of Newham life. Significantly races and cultures were no longer segregated but integrated into the community centres' activities.

¹⁴ Andrew Davey, *Urban Christianity and the Global Order: Theological Resources for an Urban Future* (Peabody Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2002), p. 4.

¹⁵ London, SMLICA, Letters, Dawes to Whitwell, 24 December 1987.

¹⁶ Jane Garnett and Alana Harris, 'Sources of the Sacred: Migration, Modernity and Religious Identity' in *Oxford Historian: A magazine of the Faculty of History for Oxford Historians* Vol. VII (the Faculty of History Oxford University, 2009), pp. 16-20, p. 19.

¹⁷ Interview, Palmer, 29 July 2011.

¹⁸ Interview, Bright, 8 August 2011.

¹⁹ Interview, Lewis, 11 August 2011.

One area however, that all have struggled with was providing teaching and worship space for other faith communities.²⁰ Even a liberal parish like St Bartholomew's felt that it was a step too far to allow Islamic classes on their premises. The only centre that played host to another worshipping faith community was St Michael's, but even here the room used by the Sai Baba group was the responsibility of the Froud Centre. This had remained a contentious issue in how willing these buildings were to open up their premises for all the activities of a community.

In the past one of the greatest challenges these buildings faced was indifference. The Church was felt to be just no longer relevant in people's lives. An influential figure like the entertainer Michel Palin could visit a church in the 1970s and feel it only spoke of escapism to him.²¹ Ann Morisy states the Church is no longer in a position to dictate immutable beliefs to the world.²² If these churches wanted to become relevant in peoples' lives once again these community buildings would have to be seen as an important milestone on that journey. The Bishop of Chelmsford, John Waine, felt that this model of church engagement with the inner-city could be the panacea to Anglican ministry in this most intractable of mission fields. There was more than a sense that the Church could prevent declining relevance. John Waine said, in a speech to the Diocesan Synod in the mid-1980s, that the tide of deterioration had been stemmed.²³

Essential to the process of renewal was the need to change the Church's buildings. To be relevant in modern society would require a very different set of tools to those of a century before and, as Giles suggested, implicitly meant updating old plant.²⁴ John Whitwell, discussing the possibility of simply repairing the old St Michael's, said: 'I mean what would the building be used for... in the great social changes that were taking place... in

²⁰ Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

²¹ Michael Palin, *Diaries 1969-1979: The Python Years* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson), p. 55. His conclusion is drawn from a visit he made to his local church ironically in preparation for his son's Baptism in 1971.

²² Ann Morisy, *Beyond the Good Samaritan: Community Ministry and Mission* (London: Continuum, 1997), p. 2.

²³ London, Fox Archive, Press Bulletin c 1988.

²⁴ Giles, *Re-pitching the Tent*, p. 4 .

Newham and East London at the time?’²⁵ This type of communication with the world was, for authors like Morisy, essential to maintaining a living, relevant Church.²⁶

Another function of their original vision was to maintain a role in Newham life. As was noted in Chapter Three the Church of England of the 1970s and 80s was written off, not least by fellow Christians. There was a bleak picture of church buildings outlined in 1990 that the legacy of *Faith in the City* had still not rectified.²⁷ However, thanks to national campaigns such as the publication of *Faith in the City* and the Church Urban Fund, the Church of England reasserted a role within the inner-city. In Chapter Four there was strong evidence presented that suggested that, despite its pessimistic nature, the Church was able to devote substantial skills and enthusiasm to raising large sums of money for these underprivileged areas of Britain. These centres were able to carve out a role in their communities. Newham Council had struggled to cope with the issues that it faced in such a destitute part of the country. It had been willing to work collaboratively with outside agencies, including the faith communities and thus the Church of England had been seen as an ally rather than a rival.

These centres were now a significant strand of the voluntary sector. They did not hold the same responsibilities and role that the larger organization such as Barnardo’s held, but they were providing much needed spaces for small community groups. One of the most recent reports from the Church of England, *Moral, but No Compass*, was commissioned by no less a person than Stephen Lowe, the Bishop of Hulme, in his role as chair of the Urban Bishops Panel.²⁸ The Church of England may not be the leader of social provision that it might optimistically have hoped it would be in the post-war era, but it had a very evident role in supplementing statutory provision that could not be ignored. As Lowe stated in the Foreword to the report:

²⁵ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

²⁶ Ann Morisy, *Bothered and Bewildered: Enacting Hope in Troubled Times* (London: Continuum, 2009), p. 38.

²⁷ *Living Faith in the City: A Progress report by the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Advisory Group on Urban Priority Area* (London: General Synod of the Church of England, 1990), p. 55.

²⁸ Stephen, Lowe, Chair, *Moral, But No Compass, Government, Church and the Future of Welfare* (Chelmsford: Matthew James Publishing Ltd, 2008).

It has earned the right as the largest voluntary organization (and so much more) in the country to be listened to and worked with as a respected partner in the area of welfare provision as it is in education. For, as the report shows, without it this country would be infinitely poorer.²⁹

In the closing decades of the twentieth-century there was a sense that the Church was expected to retreat from the world, a victim of secular forces. Towler and Coxon believe that by the 1970s the community role of the Church was in decline.³⁰ A very simple measure of success was how these buildings attracted meaningful and important community activity onto their site. Moreover, it is their praxis that could be said to be the test of the authentic Christian community.³¹ These buildings were not just open but needed by the community. There was little doubt that these centres had made a significant impact on the life of their congregations and their communities, the open nature of church buildings that Giles calls its 'reckless generosity'.³²

There is still a doctors' surgery at St Bartholomew's, as well as a thriving children's nursery at Fellowship House. A day centre for the physically and mentally handicapped had been established to replace the day care for the elderly the centre began with. The coffee bar was now host to a creative project called the Kitchen Table that sought to build bridges within the community through food and conversation.³³

The Kitchen Table was a project that genuinely sought to connect the two halves of a church and community centre. Both the instigators of this project were unusual in that they were theologically trained, one a former Roman Catholic priest, the other a former lay worker with an MA in theology. This scheme had striven hard to bridge the gap between the spiritual and pastoral aspirations of the local church and the need to provide

²⁹ Lowe, *Moral, But No Compass*, p. 8.

³⁰ Robert Towler and A. P. M. Coxon, *The Fate of the Anglican Clergy: A Sociological Study* (London: Macmillan Press, 1979), p. 192.

³¹ Elaine L. Graham, *Transforming Practice: Pastoral theology in an Age of Uncertainty* (London: Mowbray, 1996), p. 139.

³² Giles, *Re-pitching the Tent*, p. 129.

³³ Interview, Cross, 26 August 2011.

food and drink to customers.³⁴ Through a series of forums, in the context of a shared meal, different constituents of the community centre met to discuss a given topic, socialize and build relationships. Authors such as the feminist theologian Tina Beattie and Steven Lowe himself were speakers at the Kitchen Table.³⁵ The aims of this project included pastoral, educational, communal, and social challenge and all felt very similar to the aspirations of the congregation when they shared their common meal, the Eucharist, on a Sunday. Alongside these key players there were a plethora of counselling groups, keep fit clubs, dance groups, supplementary schools, and uniformed organizations. St Bartholomew's also accommodated Pentecostal and Coptic churches that used the worship space. There were events running seven days a week and the building was used on a daily basis throughout the year.

Most notably the children's work, at St Mark's, Forest Gate, was a significant project that the congregation were committed to. The play group, that was run three days a week, was free to families in the area and was funded exclusively by the Church. This was clearly costly in terms of people and finance but this remained an important mark of their identity. Alongside this work St Mark's also ran an elders' group, youth work, hosted a Neighbourhood Watch group, and hosted a diocesan training scheme using its premises for study and socializing. It ran three jumble sales and a Christmas fair, the proceeds going to charity, rather than church funds. They also invited up to 300 residents onto their site for barbecues on a regular basis. A computer course for the over sixties, called silver surfers was run.³⁶ In its early days it ran a pastoral visiting scheme that sought to touch the lives of every household in the parish.³⁷

St Mark's, Beckton, in contrast to the criticism it faced, was a hive of activity from its very beginning, from sports and leisure activities, counselling and borough meetings, through to youth work and a spacious coffee bar. The frustration that many had with the

³⁴ Interview, Cross, 26 August 2011.

³⁵ Interview, Cross, 26 August 2011.

³⁶ Interview, Palmer, 29 July 2011.

³⁷ Interview, Wallace, 25 July 2011.

site was not that it was unused but that it was expensive to run.³⁸ St Mark's was offering much-needed neighbourhood facilities to the people of Beckton. It has bridged the gap between diverse cultural groups and there were stories of festivals that had drawn in Chinese, African and Eastern European groups as part of a goal for cohesion. There was a community café and office facilities that local groups used.³⁹

Jeffrey Cox argued that one way the Victorian church remained relevant was through its contact with the poor through philanthropy.⁴⁰ This type of outreach was as beneficial for the character of the Church. Doris Goodchild was proud of the way the activities of St Bartholomew's Centre enabled a wider understanding of global issues and felt other churches failed to grasp essential concerns around justice and poverty.⁴¹ These community facilities ensured that congregations had to engage with the issues of the day, rather than use the worship site as a place of escape. Jane Freeman felt that St Bartholomew's would be a very inward-looking church without the community centre.⁴² Anne Cross felt that her piety could descend into indulgence if not rooted in the world.⁴³ These community churches, in the words of Brian Frost, were expected to enter into dialogue with their neighbours and not to feel they were the only source of truth.⁴⁴ Morisy goes further and places this contact with the world in the context of an encounter with Christ, through the unique place the poor hold in the purposes of God.⁴⁵ Significantly, their continued involvement in the concerns and needs of Newham people ensured they were perceived as useful by the community. Newham churches were playing a role in maintaining a national church through its conversation with urban Britain. This may be an essential step at a time when commentators see religion facing increased criticism in a modern Western world.⁴⁶

³⁸ Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

³⁹ Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

⁴⁰ Jeffrey Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth, 1870-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 269.

⁴¹ Interview, Goodchild, 11 March 2010.

⁴² Interview, Freeman, 13 June 2012.

⁴³ Interview, Cross, 26 August 2011.

⁴⁴ Frost, *The Secular in the Sacred*, p. 15.

⁴⁵ Morisy, *Beyond the Good Samaritan*, p. 7.

⁴⁶ Morisy, *Bothered and Bewildered*, p. 12.

In all the sites, projects have come and gone, but in the majority of cases the flexibility of the new buildings has meant that, where gaps emerge, it has been possible to fill them quickly, thanks to a constant demand for community space in the areas they minister in. The adaptability of such centres is a further indication that these churches have not fallen into the trap of redundancy their predecessors faced, and serve an important purpose in the borough.

There were some disappointments however. The hoped-for collaboration between the Church, Housing Association, and the doctors had never emerged. Unlike similar developments in Tower Hamlets, at the Bromley-by-Bow Centre, where there was a significant area of integration, St Bartholomew's doctors had been content to work independently of the centre. Their resources were channelled into a busy and demanding practice with little time for the absorbing task of collaboration with outside agencies. Where there was evidence of interaction was through the individual contacts made by residents of the Housing Association flats who had found a home in the centre. This was a personal choice, rather than any central policy.

Individual projects, in other centres, had also fared less well. St Michael's coffee bar had struggled to flourish in the ways the others had. This was partly due to the fact St Michael's and the Froud Centre were not built in a busy part of the borough like the end of East Ham High Street or Tollgate Road. It had depended on the patronage of clients who came to the centre. Problematically, this was not always at a time convenient for the coffee bar to be opened and it had never attracted a large, regular clientele. The space had thus been used as a social venue for different user groups of the centre, but it had never become a lively and inviting aspect of the buildings. This was one example where a blanket design for these community centres would not work.

As had been noted, there were other design problems with some of the buildings. The open spaces that were there to encourage visitors became security concerns. Alongside this other parts of the sites were ill used. The sports facility that promised much at the opening of these centres failed to attract a large following and became something of an

embarrassment to the existing community centre management.⁴⁷ Both sports halls at St Michael's, Little Ilford and St Mark's, Beckton, were under-used and the fitness room at St Michel's was eventually closed. This may have been a further indication that team sports were becoming less popular than personal training activities in a growing individualistic culture.

Volunteers and managers had also been problematic. In the early days of St Bartholomew's, it was expected the coffee bar would be organized by a stream of volunteers. The reality was that a husband and wife team made it their mission to run the centre and for a time this worked well. So successful were they that they were able to supplement the centre's finances when it was running low on funds in its early days.⁴⁸ When they retired the need for a paid manager rapidly became evident at St Bartholomew's, just as the settlements and missions of the past increasingly required a professional staff. Recruiting the right employees has been variable. A vision that the coffee bar was more than simply a means of raising funds and played a pivotal role in the ethos of the centre has been hard to communicate.⁴⁹

All the projects hoped that their congregations would volunteer for service in the community centre.⁵⁰ The reality is that few have found this a ready source of labour. This does not mean that these projects failed, but might simply indicate that members of congregations were already active in many other spheres of life.⁵¹ Moreover, for some, this opportunity to collaborate with outside agencies were gifts to mission if one had a theology that believed the Holy Spirit was capable of inspiring non-Christians.⁵²

The Kitchen Table had proved to be a contentious project as an experiment and a useful barometer of pastoral perception by these community centres. Its controversial nature was that it was not a purely financial venture. The centre would not make a substantial profit

⁴⁷ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

⁴⁸ Interview, Freeman, 13 June 2012.

⁴⁹ Interview, Cross, 26 August 2011.

⁵⁰ Interview, Stow, 3 August 2011.

⁵¹ Jane Freeman indicated that many active members of her church had demands placed on them outside the congregation's life. Interview, Freeman, 13 June 2012.

⁵² Morisy, *Beyond the Good Samaritan*, p. 11.

from the Kitchen Table. Yet it was a venture that genuinely attempted to connect the unchurched with the church-going, raise awareness of spiritual issues and create a wider and more inclusive sense of community than other more individualistic projects. Not unsurprisingly, it was given a home in a number of these centres at different times, St Michael's, St Mark's, Beckton and finally in St Bartholomew's. The need to move was perceived to be due to the radical nature of the project and the financial needs that dominated the centres concerns.⁵³ Regrettably, a myopia regarding the wider benefits of such an initiative might also have been evident. This pointed to a struggle these centres have had, to hold on to, and reassert their original vision, in the face of a shifting context and fresh challenges.

Despite these problems these centres had enabled the Church to contribute to the life of the borough and stand alongside other voluntary sector agencies. Notwithstanding the vicissitudes of a changing social and community scene they had been able to invite community groups successfully within their walls and keep open their doors to the public in a way that would have been unimaginable with their old buildings. They themselves have had to respond to the challenging issues that faced the borough and not hide behind the safety of a church wall. Both community and Church had been enriched by this process and had enabled the Church to remain a still relevant organization in the presence of what many might perceive to have been a multi-faith and un-churched society.

Have these projects been sustainable?

We will look at the finances of these centres in much more detail later on in the chapter, examining how they have contributed to the needs of the wider church. However, there are other aspects of finance such as expenditure on maintenance that are worth exploring, in particular how they have guaranteed a healthy financial base for themselves. A further aim that these buildings set themselves was to be self supporting over the following years. A mark of secularization has been the diminution of resources the churches

⁵³ Interview, Cross, 26 August 2011.

possessed for maintenance especially in communities where Christians were poor.⁵⁴ It would have been essential that these community churches should have built-in sustainability if they were not to repeat the errors of the past. Again it is worth reminding ourselves of the plight of these original buildings. St Bartholomew's church had been a significant drain on the Church in the 1970s and the repair bill in 1975 was the initial stimulus to reorganization. St Mark's, Forest Gate, had discovered that it was more financially advantageous to demolish the entire church and begin again. St Michael's had been burdened with leaks in the roof and halls that were no longer able to deliver services that the local community required. Moreover, these buildings did not encourage funding. John Whitwell claimed he had little trouble attracting grants to maintain the medieval church of St Mary's, Little Ilford, but there was no money available from Chelmsford for the old St Michael's.⁵⁵ In the grandiosity of the St Mark's, Beckton, scheme there was, at its core, a wish to create a building that was financially self-sufficient.

Ensuring sustainability was further boosted by the collaborations these projects developed. St Bartholomew's negotiated a very advantageous deal with its partners to share responsibility for repair and maintenance of the external features of the centre. St Michael's had shared the responsibility for managing the site with Aston Mansfield Charities.

Little had needed to change at St Mark's, Forest Gate, in the previous thirty years and that was testimony to the quality of the building materials used. St Mark's, Forest Gate, had only in the last few years had to begin to replace worn out equipment. St Michael's had undergone some alteration to Aston's part of the site but the overall repair bill had been insignificant in the last twenty years. The quality and durability of equipment bought at the time of the rebuilds had meant churches were not spending time and resource on repair. The oral testimony of those interviewed drew attention to the importance of quality in design and choice of furnishings.

⁵⁴ Richard O'Brien, (Chair) *Faith in the City. A Call for Action by Church and Nation. The Report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas*, (London: Church House Publishing, 1985), p. 141.

⁵⁵ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

Although the initial reason these buildings were redeveloped was not basic financial reward, what practically ensued was the Church of England was financially secure enough to retain a presence in the area. This could offer a site that was well maintained and guaranteed for much-needed community use rather than sold for commercial gain.

Another means of evaluating sustainability has been the way these buildings have created financial reserves, and a striking instance was the example of St Bartholomew's, East Ham. It will be remembered that in the mid-1970s St Bartholomew's cash reserves were very low and they were unable to pay for the repair of their buildings. In the intervening years they have been able to amass a cash reserve of over £137,067 in their investment account alone.⁵⁶ The accounts for St Bartholomew's for the year ending 31 December 2010 reported this reserve. This substantial sum has been achieved principally through the revenue of the community facilities at St Bartholomew's centre. Although a complex as substantial as St Bartholomew's needs significant building reserves for emergencies, in the same accounts it was able to spend £10,673.17 on building maintenance for 2010 and £11,354.60 the previous year. The contrast between the old site and the new could not be more marked, with an ongoing programme of repairs that would have been unthinkable in the past and a constant operating profit for the site. The financial success of these buildings has meant that some inner-city Anglican parishes have incomes that rival those of their well-heeled suburban neighbours.

It was telling that monetary concerns were no longer a significant issue for these churches, and when interviewing incumbents and laity they felt these centres were financially comfortable and indeed in some circumstances have reserves that feel almost embarrassing.⁵⁷ Churches like St Mark's, Forest Gate, consciously opened their site up to different community groups for free as a means of welcoming people in and offering something back to the neighbourhood.⁵⁸ As costs rose, and demands from the central

⁵⁶ London, SBCA, Annual Parochial Meeting Sunday 6 March 2011, St Bartholomew's Centre and Parish Office Treasurer's Report, 6 March 2011.

⁵⁷ Interview, Freeman, 13 June 2012.

⁵⁸ Interview, Kemp, 15 August 2011.

administration of Chelmsford increased, these centres were to prove a valuable source of revenue to develop ministry in Newham and pay for the costs of clergy.

However, some financial problems have increased. There was a burden placed on some of these institutions in raising salaries for the staff of the centres. The responsibility fell to the parish priest and in the case of St Mark's, Beckton, this proved impossible, and after various attempts at alleviating the problem it was finally agreed the centre and church would effectively be separated.⁵⁹ Management and revenue was now the responsibility of a Roman Catholic charity. It became apparent that there was a maximum size and complexity to these projects, too small and they did not generate enough income to cover costs, too large and their administrative bill swamped any profits generated. However, even in the midst of such problems St Mark's continued to generate a profit and was able to repair worn out plant.⁶⁰

A further cause for concern for St Mark's, Beckton, has been the continual struggle with heating and security issues. Almost immediately after it opened there were problems with the new building. The heating was prohibitively expensive to use.⁶¹ Instead of cutting down on bills the system was wasting money and had to be replaced within a few years.⁶² The architecture of the building hindered wider community use as activities in one part of the site effectively meant other rooms could not be used.⁶³

Assessing how successful these buildings were in fulfilling their own vision, and how far that original vision had to change through subsequent events is a complex question. The assumption that the authors of these buildings had any individual, clear agenda, much less a shared ideology would be to impute a systematic approach to them that might be unreasonable, as Laurie Blaney has suggested.⁶⁴ Anglican parishes operate quasi-independently of each other and any ethos is often shaped by the attitudes of the

⁵⁹ Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

⁶⁰ Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

⁶¹ Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

⁶² Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

⁶³ Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

⁶⁴ Laurie Blaney, 'The Position and Practice of Anglicanism in an Urban Priority Area, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Essex, 1996), p. 330.

individual clergy in post at the time. In many cases these new buildings were a response to the dire need they perceived they faced in the context of failing structures and obvious short term aims that had to be met, such as repairs and maintenance.

St Bartholomew's had perhaps the most clearly expressed theological aspirations of any of the projects and took the greatest time to explore those ambitions with their community and shape them into the building they wanted. Drawing on Lowe's experiences in Birmingham, and his and Purdy's training under J. G. Davies, they sought to create a building that expressed Davies' theology in bricks and mortar.⁶⁵ What emerged was not just a practical building, but one that articulated a particular theological stance, namely that service, even service in a secular context, was engagement with the Kingdom of God. For some this theological foundation was essential. For authors such as Laurie Green, theology was not just a marginal pastime but the foundational support for social justice.⁶⁶ The outpouring of the sacrificial love, at the heart of a theology of service was what this building was supposed to stand for.⁶⁷

One of the most imaginative aspects of these early projects was the connection they wanted to make between the spiritual and the practical world. A theology rooted in the Incarnation aimed to break down barriers and repositions faith back into the public arena. A challenge for all the developments was to connect their community activity with the spiritual life of the building. All the centres were designed in such a way that their church space could remain open in tandem with the centre. This meant people could access the worship space for quiet and reflection. This was a shift away from J. G. Davies' original vision for such complexes, but this example of his ideological approach was never part of the original vision of the developments in Newham.⁶⁸ As Stephen Lowe said in interview, this was too impractical and debilitating for St Bartholomew's.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010. Interview, Purdy, 6 April 2010.

⁶⁶ Laurie Green, *Power to the Powerless: Theology Brought to Life* (London: Marshal Pickering, 1987), p. 9.

⁶⁷ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010. Interview, Freeman, 13 June 2012. Interview, Wallace, 25 July 2011.

⁶⁸ Interview, Purdy, 6 April 2010.

⁶⁹ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

For the majority of these projects the church hosted the spaces used and did not manage the projects directly. It could be argued that the church was now there to enable the community to solve its own problems, not do it for them.⁷⁰ Moreover, the theological rationale offered by J. G. Davies had meant that the churches could see their service as genuinely part of their Christian life, not just an adjunct to it. The only exception to this was St Mark's, Forest Gate, which saw, as part of its original vision for the building, the exclusive involvement of the congregation in the management of projects in the centre. The centres' usefulness had been one of the most sustained and winning aspects of these original projects.

In truth, all the examples chosen for this study would want, to some extent, to admit to such a theological and spiritual approach. What becomes apparent is that sustaining this vision was practically difficult. Who would be the custodian of such an approach? It depended on a static populace, one that was hardly evident in contemporary Newham with a constantly shifting community.⁷¹ It also required the clergy leadership to share and maintain that vision. This was a difficult task given the diversity of religious traditions contained in the Church of England. This course was subject to the outlook of individual clergy, how theologically literate they were and how interested they were in the buildings themselves. Those Christians that stress a personal, individualistic approach to faith have struggled with the messy, inclusive and corporate expression of piety articulated in these buildings.

In all cases retaining the original vision had been hard to achieve. Clergy were not trained in this approach and were not expected to have this knowledge of community-involvement that many of these plants required. That did not mean that the vision had been lost, but simply that it had at times been expressed more strongly, with particular clergy, at their heads. Jane Freeman, speaking about her experience with St Bartholomew's, talked warmly of the opportunities for community engagement that the

⁷⁰ Frost, *The Secular in the Sacred*, p. 25.

⁷¹ Interview, Freeman, 13 June 2012.

centre affords.⁷² Alec Kellaway and Don Jones expressed their dismay at having to manage a site that seemed to distract them from their purpose as Anglicans to nurture and grow a congregation.⁷³ In the midst of this, holding on to a clear theology that encapsulates these buildings has been sporadic.

Brown makes the point that one measure of secularization is the abandonment of a series of protocols that were religious in origin.⁷⁴ As has already been said, how universally accepted these protocols were held, given the speed with which they were rejected, may be questioned. There is evidence that suggests the Church was complicit in their demise, given the response by leading Churchmen like Michael Ramsey to the topical issues of his day. The suggestion is that far from the Church being stripped of these values, they were in fact busy discovering new ones to fit a more complex, democratic and fragmented world. The aspirations that these buildings had been founded on included welcome, community and inclusion, these were the new protocols the Church wished to support in the new century.

Have these centres succeeded?

Two particular areas will be looked at to examine if and how these centres have actually succeeded. Importantly, the criteria that have been chosen were not the two most significant issues the centres themselves might have articulated, but they do have a direct bearing on the most basic evidence of secularization and decline, that is numbers of adherents and income.

Have they been able to reverse declining numbers of adherents and hold on to members? None of the buildings expressed an overt aim to evangelise the local community. Even the most Evangelical church, St Mark's, Forest Gate, felt that the original vision was of service to the community. However, it was hoped by all that these centres would be inviting, welcoming places not just in finding a community resource, but finding a

⁷² Interview, Freeman, 13 June 2012.

⁷³ Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011. Interview, Jones, 22 August 2011.

⁷⁴ Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding secularisation 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 12.

spiritual meaning to life. Almost all reported a growth in new members, some of whom were actively willing to help with the social and community activities.⁷⁵ Certainly, John Whitwell, the Rector of Little Ilford, hoped that attractive new buildings, which engaged with the community, would draw people into the life of the local church.

St Mark's, Forest Gate, saw the architecture of the building guiding visitors into the church.⁷⁶ St Bartholomew's hoped that this would be a new way of being church in the community. Given the evidence of what was being done in these buildings all indications were that some success had been achieved in halting decline. At least what was evident was that the churches could hold their own in this changing context. Numbers of adherents have dropped little in the intervening decades but the much-vaunted collapse of Christianity in Newham has not occurred.

Perhaps one of the most significant differences with the past was the growing place of faith in the life of the borough. Research carried out by Aston Charities reveals a level of contact with organized religion that many suburban churches would envy. Newham was evidently now a place of religion rather than irreligion.⁷⁷ Greg Smith estimated twenty-five percent of the population of the borough who were interviewed in his research had some active involvement in a faith, although not necessarily Christianity.⁷⁸ The challenge, in the use of these buildings, has been to maintain a meaningful congregation in a competitive market. Clare Taylor, in her research in Brixton, indicates churches there would not have survived without the Jamaican diaspora filling pews; the same could be said in Newham for not just the Caribbean but also the African and Asian Christians.⁷⁹ This success was largely due to the inviting nature of their new centres. Although much

⁷⁵ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011. Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011, Interview, Wallace, 25 July 2011.

⁷⁶ Interview, Kemp, 15 August 2011.

⁷⁷ A great deal of research in to the religious nature of Newham was carried out by Aston Charities Community-Involvement Unit in the late 1990s. Simply in terms of the number of religious organizations based in Newham the borough seemed to reflect a more complex religious make-up. Greg Smith, *Religious Trends in the London Borough of Newham*. (London: Aston Charities Trust, 1999).

⁷⁸ Greg Smith, *Newham: Directory of Religious Groups 1994-95* (London: Aston Community-Involvement Unit, 1994), p. 11.

⁷⁹ Claire Taylor, 'British Churches and Jamaican Migration – A Study of Religion and Identities, 1948-1965' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Anglia Polytechnic University, 2002), p. 199.

of this had been achieved by what Alan Bright, the Lay Reader at St Mark's, Beckton, called 'transfer growth'.⁸⁰ However, conversion was not the principal aim of these developments but fresh dialogue with the community.

Electoral rolls

In the weighty matter of reversing the trend in secularization, an aim that was barely hoped-for by these projects, how significant has their impact been? Rex Walford has cautiously drawn attention to the information that can be gleaned from electoral rolls, recognizing this is not the definitive evidence of church attendance.⁸¹ Increasingly, in the secularization debate measuring success solely by attendance has been understandably viewed as a crude measure of the impact of a particular church in a given area.⁸² Indeed, there should be a relative degree of suspicion of placing too much emphasis on attendance and success in relation to these new buildings. Many of the instigators of these projects rejected numerical growth as the principal aim of their project. Instead warmer, welcoming and easily maintainable worship space for the existing congregation was a higher priority than simple numerical growth. There was a perception that electoral rolls did not always reflect the real attendance at a given church. As late as the 1960s often households would include themselves on the roll to ensure their children could be married in the parish church.

By the late 1970s and 80s electoral rolls of churches, particularly in the unfashionable end of Chelmsford Diocese like Newham, could be relied upon to indicate, if not weekly attendance at church, at least the attendance numbers on an average Sunday over a month. These records have survived thanks to the *Chelmsford Diocesan Year Book*, which lists the incumbents and senior lay figures in each individual church in each deanery in the diocese. Alongside this, there is a simple figure of the electoral roll for that

⁸⁰ Interview, Bright, 8 August 2011.

⁸¹ Rex Walford, "'As by magic': the growth of 'New London' north of the Thames 1918-1945 and the response of the Church of England" (unpublished doctoral thesis, Anglia Polytechnic University, 2003), p. 233.

⁸² Jeffrey Cox has pointed out the anomalies in judging statistics in relation to church attendance compared with something as prosaic as those who attend public houses. Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society*, p. 23.

given year. To compare figures at different time periods it would be helpful to note that the overall population of Newham has not changed dramatically in this period. The population, based on census returns, has only grown from 235,496 in 1971 to 243,737 in 2001. Given this modest growth in population it could be assumed that, like other parts of Britain, Newham was facing the same slow decline in adherents to the Established Church, but in this inner-city area the evidence points to an opposite conclusion. Despite Brown's assertions of decline, religion continues to be a factor in Newham life.⁸³

However, if electoral rolls are perceived to be one simple measure of success amongst a range of other tests, they can provide some evidence that these buildings were enabling the Church to hold its own in Newham at the time. All the churches involved in the research indicate growth over the period from the mid-1970s to 2009. Within this forty year period one of the most substantial growth amongst these church community centres was that of St Michael's, Little Ilford. If one looks at Table 5.1 we see they had an electoral roll of over 100 in 1975/76 compared with that of 139 in 1995/6.

East Ham went through a similar period of growth with an electoral roll of 163 in the mid-1970s at the exact point they were looking to redevelop. By 1984/5 the period when the new St Bartholomew's was to be opened the figure had grown to 212. Looking again at Table 5.1, the electoral roll of St Mark's, Forest Gate, grew from 139 in 1984/5 to 168 between 1986/7. Martin Wallace claimed that the move to the doctor's surgery, and the transition time, when they had no designated worship space, was the period of greatest growth, and the figures seem to bear this out.⁸⁴ St Mark's, Beckton, is difficult to assess as this was a new building with no existing history. Yet even here, with tales of tiny congregations meeting in a portakabin in Beckton in the early 1980s, their growth from nothing to 90 indicates the new building attracted rather than repelled. This was a respectable figure for Newham attendance and indicated that a new church was in demand and could quickly be established.

⁸³ Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 4.

⁸⁴ Interview, Wallace, 25 July 2011.

Table 5.1: ELECTORAL ROLL MEMBERSHIP OF THE PARISHES IN NEWHAM DEANERY BETWEEN 1975 & 2009⁸⁵.

Source: Table compiled by the author from data obtained in the Chelmsford Diocesan Directory in the author's possession.

Parish/Year	74/75	75/76	77/78	1984/85	1986/7	1988/89	1989/90	95/96	2000	2009
St Cedd's, Canning Town	81	95	120	50	45	45	45	45	n/a	n/a
St Matthias, Canning Town	100.5	100.5	105	65	61	61	61	30		
East Ham Team Ministry	163.5	163.5	204	212	229	293	302	154	146	181
St George's, East Ham	135	135	147	115	129	129	131	133	85	65
St Paul's, East Ham	108	108	106	93	100	105	105	123	124	116
All Saints, Forest Gate	109	109	116	32	40	40	40	96	96	102
Emmanuel, Forest Gate	100	100	90	54	47	60	55	39	65	88
St Edmund's, Forest Gate	135	135	125	71	78	78	65	81	86	86
St Mark's, Forest Gate	112	112	118	139	168	184	184	149	120	102
St Saviour's, Forest Gate	87	167	144	119	124	124	124	175	156	127
St Matthew's, West Ham	64.5									60
St Barnabas', Manor Park	108	108	106	85	84	84	84	77	54	62
St Michael's, Little Ilford	101.5	101.5	113	105	121	121	121	139	105	80
St John's, North Woolwich	35	35	47	37	40	42	46	43	38	26
Plaistow Team	183	183	188	94	102	87	87	49	129	220
St Mary's, Plaistow	70	70	59							
St John's, Stratford	76.5	76.5	77	82	79	79	79	189	247	285
St James', Stratford										54
St Paul's, Stratford	41.5	41.5	41	36	40	41	41	38	50	50
Ascension, Victoria Dock	62.5	62.5	53	38	38	38	25	30	41	41
St Luke's, Victoria Dock	73	73	109	36	32	32	32	15	102	47
All Saints, West Ham	108.5	108.5	140	99	99	105	105	116	176	163
St Mark's, Beckton	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	91	83	92
Total numbers	2055									2047

We have to be cautious about claiming too much for these new buildings. Some churches are difficult to assess as their roll numbers are occasionally included with their other team members, as in the case of St Mary's, Plaistow. Frustratingly, it is difficult to disentangle St Bartholomew's roll numbers from St Mary's, East Ham and St Alban's, Upton Park. Certainly the numbers in Victorian buildings such as St John's, Stratford, that had seen little alteration to its interior since the war, had grown in the period from around seventy-

⁸⁵ Early electoral roll figures recorded individuals who were listed in two parishes as .5 in each.

six in 1975/6 to an electoral roll of 285 in 2009. This prominent town-centre church clearly attracts members from across East London and has a significant ministry with Christians from Africa, as it has become a lively Evangelical church.

Other churches, in turn, have dwindled to extinction such as St Cedd's, Canning Town, which boasted a respectable 120 member in 1977/8 but was closed and sold by early 2000. St Luke's, Victoria Dock, has faced a similar fate declining from 189 members on its electoral roll in 1970 to just forty-seven by 2009. This decline reflected the fact Canning Town was one of the most isolated parts of the deanery. Nor has all the growth been centred on an Evangelical revival. St George's, East Ham, St Paul's, Stratford, St Saviours, Forest Gate and the Ascension all are rooted in the Evangelical tradition and yet their numbers have remained relatively stable over the last thirty years.

None of this growth could be described as spectacular, and nor is there a suggestion that the new buildings alone were responsible for growth, but there is every indication that Newham was holding its own in relation to the decline of the past. These new developments may not have guaranteed that new members would be attracted into them solely because they were new builds, but the buildings were very much more fit for the purpose of worship with smaller more intimate and community-minded congregations. They were more adaptable to fluctuations in population and worship style that meant one could worship in a building that did not feel half empty, cavernous and cold.

It would be useful to compare this deanery with one of its more affluent and suburban neighbours, that of Havering. Turning to Table 5.2 there is a breakdown of the Havering electoral roll figures for the same period as Newham's.

Table 5.2: ELECTORAL ROLL MEMBERSHIP OF THE PARISHES IN HAVERING DEANERY BETWEEN 1975 & 2009.

Source: Table compiled by the author from data obtained in the Chelmsford Diocesan Directory in the author's possession.

Parish/Year	74/75	75/76	77/78	84/85	86/7	88/89	89/90	95/96	2000	2009
Cranham, All Saints	128	128	115	118	130	136	136	125	125	97
St Luke's, Cranham	148	148	180	251	275	348	348	448	437	404
St Michael's, Gidea Park	266	266	266	209	209	267	273	273	245	129
St George's, Harold Hill	71	71	88	106	114	127	152	112	113	131
St Paul's, Harold Wood	91	91	91	97	97	97	97	101	123	95
St Peter's, Harold Wood	376	376	289	382	394	400	400	403	353	363
St Andrew's, Hornchurch	855	855	1007	713	713	713	713	697	678	561
Holy Cross, Hornchurch	172	172	172	151	149	151	151	152	142	98
St Nicholas, Elm Park	110	116	111	101	101	101	101	101	119	66
All Saint's, Squirrels Heath	322	322	322	224	228	228	228	228	142	105
St Mary's, North Ockendon	113.5	113.5	138	118	121	121	121	136	137	94
Rainham	368	368	283	185	185	241	235	247	214	151
St John's, South Hornchurch			137	152	152	197	181	126	113	101
Wennington	15	15	14	14	14	41	37	34	37	17
The Ascension, Collier Row	89	89	143	104	124	124	124	138	124	124
The Good Shepherd,	163	163	163	152	152	190	190	172	175	212
St James', Collier Row	148	148	147	137	137	137	143	116	118	32
Havering-atte-Bower	114	114	144	118	118	130	130	n/a	100	79
St Alban's, Romford	60.5	60.5	53	61	72	82	85	76	65	96
St Andrew's, Romford	124	124	125	131	137	137	153	131	97	128
St Augustine's, Romford	120	120	120	134	141	149	149	152	126	74
St Edward's, Romford	295	376	352	501	567	622	670	664	474	427
St John's, Romford	64.5	64.5	85	61	61	70	70	57	62	46
St Laurence, Upminster	410	410	221	291	291	371	376	330	275	174
Total number	4623.5								3804	

Here the change in adherents has been more marked. There are examples of churches that have more than maintained their numbers in the period from 1975 to 2009 such as the Good Shepard, Collier Row and spectacular growth in places such as the Evangelical church of St Luke's, Cranham (from 148 in 1975/6 to 404 in 2009), yet the overall figures show that over 800 members disappeared from the roll in this period, compared

with a decline in only a handful members in Newham. This is a significant loss in membership and only partly can be explained by the changing use of the electoral roll.

Unlike Newham, Havering was a place where people chose to marry. It is probable that the more affluent area of Havering had bulging electoral rolls to accommodate families that wished to select the church they wanted family members to be married in. It is unlikely that this is the whole story and some significant decline in Anglican numbers in Havering has to be assumed. Conversely, one of the key factors in Newham's survival is the influx of ethnic minorities who have deep ties to organized religion. Havering has, as yet, resisted accommodating these new communities in any large numbers. Again, like Newham, its population had grown little between 1971 and 2001, from approximately 220,000 to 224,248. Yet, despite these two factors in growth and decline, the effects of secularization were most markedly felt, not in the inner-city but in fact the wealthy suburbs. That is a significant challenge to the preconceptions of those brought up on Wickham and Inglis' view of church decline.

Stipends

The sustainability of these projects and their reserves have already been noted. A more pressing need was the demand made by the diocese to pay for ministry. A basic means of assessing the financial successes of these sites was their ability to pay their diocesan quotas, the annual levy on each church in the diocese that contributed towards the wider ministry of the Church. *Faith in the City* recognized that often giving in Urban Priority Areas was more sacrificial than that of suburban parishes. People gave a higher percentage of their disposable income in the inner-city than they did in suburbia.⁸⁶ Most churches in Newham were able to pay their quota set by the diocese. By the close of the century the cost of ministry was a growing concern for the Church.⁸⁷ In recent years these quotas have taken on a political dimension as some parishes fail to pay, or reduce their giving to the diocese, as a means of protesting against diocesan policy.

⁸⁶ O'Brien, *Faith in the City*, p. 37.

⁸⁷ Anthony Russell, *The Clerical Profession* (London: SPCK, 1980), p. 296.

This highlights one of the inherent weaknesses in the process, as this quota system is given on a voluntary basis with few penalties that a diocese can impose on parishes that fail to pay. This has meant it is practically very difficult to judge whether inability to pay is due to financial pressure or ideological disagreement. The financial records for Newham deanery since 1997 indicate that, despite being in an area of significant deprivation, few churches in the borough defaulted on their giving. In Appendix 3 there is a breakdown of the annual quotas asked for by the diocese and the actual returns for individual parishes in Newham over nine years. Three parishes failed to give one hundred percent of their total assessment in this period. However, the East Ham Team, St Mark's, Forest Gate, St Michael's, Manor Park and even the financially challenged St Mark's, Beckton, all gave one hundred percent of their assessed quotas to the diocese.

There is strong evidence that Newham has been able to sustain the required level of giving to the diocese and that it has consistently been able to take its share of the burden of ministry in Chelmsford Diocese. This was a very different scenario from that which was predicted for it in the 1970s. These buildings' incomes supplement to a considerable degree the work of individual parishes and their financial success has meant churches in the borough have turned from maintenance to mission.

To give some indication of how Newham relates to the wider church it would again be worth comparing it with one of its fellow deaneries. Turning once again to Havering Deanery, Newham's more affluent neighbour, as an exemplar, what is first noted is the substantial difference in assessment between Newham and Havering. Appendix 4 gives the same breakdown of monies asked for and received from Havering for the same period as Newham. In 2009, Havering was expected to raise £1,126,388.12 in comparison with Newham's £391,848.14. This would average out at £46,933 per parish in Havering as opposed to £19,592 in Newham. Only two parishes in that year failed to pay their complete quota in Newham, whereas ten out of twenty-four failed to do so in Havering. Newham was able to raise over ninety-six percent of its quota whereas Havering managed a little over ninety-four percent. Although the financial demands of Chelmsford are not onerous on Newham (an average of £191 annually per head, in 2009 based on the

electoral roll membership), they can hardly be said to be exorbitant on Havering either at £292 per head, approximately just under £6.00 per head, per week. Looking at Appendix 3 the quota that was demanded of the East Ham Team in 2009 was £32,511.60, the giving for that year was £32,964.87.

What the figures reveal is that Newham as an inner-city deanery is not a drain on the resources of the diocese. It is important to note that, like other dioceses which had few historic resources and large inner-city areas, Chelmsford Diocese receives a grant from the Church Commissioners.⁸⁸ For Newham alone in 2012 this was £576,430 and this went directly to pay for inner-city ministry.⁸⁹ Given this grant Newham is enabling substantial funds to be drawn into the diocese, as well as adding to those funds, by its own financial contributions. Deaneries such as Havering are hardly subsidizing the work of the inner-city. In 2010 it had been estimated that the cost of a stipendiary post was a little over £41,000 per year.⁹⁰ The cost of ministry in Newham would be £861,000 for twenty-one stipendiary posts. Totalling the Parish Ministry Grant, which has not altered much in two years with the money raised through the Deanery share, a figure of £942,963 is reached. This means that the diocese receives over £80,000 more for Newham than it needs, a surplus that supports the other parts of the diocese. Looking at Appendix 3 the quota that was demanded of the East Ham Team in 2009 left a small surplus from the congregational giving. The revenue from the halls and community centre is a vital contribution to the ongoing life of the Church, its wages, repairs, social life and charitable giving. Without the centre the life of the parish would be considerably poorer and limited in scope.

Identity

A measure of how these church developments have adapted to a changing context would be to examine how easy it has been to maintain a Christian identity over the last twenty

⁸⁸ Elaine Graham and Stephen Lowe, *What Makes a Good City? Public Theology and the Urban Church* (London: Darton Longman and Todd, 2009), p. 133.

⁸⁹ London, Author's Collection, Chelmsford Diocesan: Deanery Share Summary 2012.

⁹⁰ London, Author's Collection, Parish Ministry – Incumbents Costs.

years. In the context of the secularization debate this touches the heart of how overt or discreet their Christianity has been manifest as one way of measuring this.

Looking at the original settlements and missions, there was strong evidence that their original Christian identity had to be significantly played down and in some cases simply ceased to be a part of the contemporary organization. This was partly due to fresh challenges. Appealing to secular funding agencies, problems with recruitment of practising Christians or those who were in sympathy with the original aims of the organization, and the decline in influence of Christians in these original projects have all played a part in reducing these organizations' Christian ethos. Three examples indicate the changing fortunes of such initiatives, the Newham Community Renewal Programme, Aston Charities and the Mayflower Centre,.

Examining the original community projects established by Christians with an explicit Christian ethos, the Newham Community Renewal Programme was the agency that has changed the least. At its head is still a practising Christian, in holy orders.⁹¹ The project receives some funding from local churches and this enables Christians to participate in the life of the organization and still own its work. Up to 2010 Newham clergy still oversaw different aspects of the project, although much of its funding came from the Council.⁹²

In discussing the work of Aston Charities, whose wardens included Jimmy Froud and Colin Marchant, Brian Lewis, the Rector of Little Ilford in 2010, described the organization now as significantly secular in its outlook.⁹³ It is an agency that is happy to work in collaboration with the local church, but with little connection with its faith. This marks a noteworthy shift in identity. This is more significant when we factor in the reality that Aston amalgamated with another major Christian charity, Mansfield House, in 2000. Its former head was also an Anglican Clergyman. Aston Mansfield has shaped its identity

⁹¹ Canon Ann Easter is the present incumbent.

⁹² London NCRPA, Newham Community Renewal Programme, Annual Report 1995-1996. This lists contributions from numerous churches as well as a list of management and advisory committees that include the names of numerous clergy.

⁹³ Interview, Lewis, 11 August 2011.

to survive in a secular world that wishes to include all faiths rather than stress the connection with just one.⁹⁴

If they wished to maintain a Christian identity some organizations felt the only alternative was to cease to work collaboratively with external agencies and seek to survive as an independent organization. Mayflower Family Centre has had an equal but opposite reaction in that it is now exclusively a Christian organization whose principal goal is evangelism. It is no longer in the hands of the Church of England but supported by the River Christian Centre, a Pentecostal congregation.⁹⁵ This has enabled the project to maintain an overt Christian identity but only through working independently of any partners.

It is clear that a number of those agencies, which began as Christian-backed initiatives, assessed that they had to leave that Christian identity behind, or to struggle to be independent of public funding. Wishing to remain open to all potential clients and negotiating the competitive world of tendering for contracts, seeking funding from secular agencies, has meant their identities have been shaped to suit a more contemporary market. Coupled with this has been the growing trend requiring these organizations to become more professional in their approach. The cleric who was the gifted amateur would no longer suffice as the leader of these organizations. Gladys Barrett noted this tendency at the Blackfriars Settlement and it was equally true in Newham as a practice that was developing from the early 1960s.⁹⁶ This has meant that Christian leaders who once could be relied upon to take charge of these projects, without the need for any formal qualifications, or practical experience, are no longer thought to be adequate to the task. Recruitment of Chief Executive Officers has come from the world of secular, charitable agencies. If this is the fate of the old settlements and missions, how have the churches maintained their identity in the changing context of Newham?

⁹⁴ See their own literature on their web site. Aston Mansfield Charities, <http://www.aston-mansfield.org.uk>.

⁹⁵ Their website is River Christian Centre, <http://www.rccltd.org.uk>.

⁹⁶ Gladys Barrett, *Blackfriars Settlement a Short History 1887-1987* (London: Blackfriars Settlement, 1987), p. 31.

St Mark's, Forest Gate, like the Mayflower, has remained independent of any form of partnership that may lead to it compromising its position as an Evangelical Christian community facility.⁹⁷ All the projects run in St Mark's are managed by the Church. It is, as Ellen Kemp, the churchwarden, said, the only way, for them, to be sure the work was Christian.⁹⁸ The most important example of this is their free children's nursery. Thanks to the support of the church and a small, dedicated band of volunteers they offer a free nursery for parishioners. This enabled them to be liberated from the perceived restrictions that could be imposed on them. Few other churches have been able to manage such a level of financial commitment and such a ready supply of volunteers. For some this exclusive approach is not strength but a weakness in mission.⁹⁹

The dominance of the community side of these projects has resulted in some tension over their identity in the community. St Michael's is perhaps more typical, in that its experience of maintaining an identity alongside a partner organization changed as personnel changed. Its most momentous challenge was the naming of the building. Very quickly it was felt that people perceived it to be the Froud Centre, not St Michael's Church.¹⁰⁰ Ironically, these centres' original forms were easily recognized as church buildings but were poorly used by the community. This question of identity was also faced by St Mark's, Forest Gate, with its neighbours. So dominating were their role as community centres that this was now becoming perceived to be the primary function of such buildings.

Another early, but minor, crisis was when the Froud Centre wished to create a mural across part of its wall that displayed symbols of other faith.¹⁰¹ For some in the Church this was thought to be inappropriate imagery on what they felt was a Christian building. St Michel's had to share its identity with the Froud Centre. Even when the leader of the centre was a Christian there were problems with a common ethos. St Michael's early relationship with the Baptist minister who ran the Froud Centre was at times problematic.

⁹⁷ Interview, Kemp, 15 August 2011.

⁹⁸ Interview, Kemp, 15 August 2011.

⁹⁹ Morisy, *Beyond the Good Samaritan*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁰ Interview, Clarke, 11 October 2011.

¹⁰¹ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

Clearly a shared Christian identity did not guarantee a shared ethos about the running of the centre.¹⁰² With a change in leadership relations grew and became much more collaborative with joint projects undertaken such as a Millennium celebrations. With further changes in personnel and financial cut backs there has been less opportunity to communicate and collaborate between the Froud Centre and St Michael's. On their part the Rector admitted that they no longer have the volunteers from the church to support such joint initiatives.¹⁰³ This indicated the biggest blow to collaboration was not separate ideologies but declining resources.

Ironically, St Mark's, Beckton, struggled with what sort of identity it had as an ecumenical project. Although made up of different denominations it quickly became apparent that a new independent identity was emerging that lay claim to no particular denomination. Don Jones recalled: 'I think that was one of the best and the most successful bits of the whole story in a sense. A great privilege to be involved in... a lot of people did come to faith through the whole enterprise while we were there... [but] how [did] you sort of fit them in and how they belong...'¹⁰⁴ Worship was broadly Evangelical in feel but uniquely shaped by their identity. Only the Roman Catholic congregation remained independent, though friendly, with its own minister and a separate time slot for worship.

To add to the confusion of identity, even in the management of the building, a succession of Christian groups from the YMCA, a Baptist organization called Bonney Downs, and a Roman Catholic charity, Anchor Housing Association, have all taken responsibility for St Mark's at various times. There has been a concern that the local authority, one of the principal funders of the projects at St Mark's, has been uncomfortable with such a Christian identity, although there has been little evidence this was the case.¹⁰⁵ It says something about the anxieties of some in the Church about how publicly their faith could be expressed. St Mark's has now developed as a separate entity to the community

¹⁰² Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

¹⁰³ Interview, Lewis, 11 August 2011.

¹⁰⁴ Interview, Jones, 22 August 2011.

¹⁰⁵ Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

functions of the building. They effectively operate as a congregation using part of the site. This has meant that their Christian identity is robust but any Christian link with the centre is vague. One key reason for this is the inability of successive clergy to manage such a problematic site. Some churches in Newham were finding it hard to take on the running of such complex entities. As has been noted some later clergy felt ill-equipped and ambivalent towards these buildings. They did not possess a theological language to justify their work in such projects. St Bartholomew's faced similar issues. The identity and direction of their centre depended on the clergy leadership as there were no other agencies to turn to. It has become evident that these community buildings have been perceived to be either burdens or opportunities by successive clergy.

Icons

A simple indicator of how confident these buildings were in their Christian identity was how they used Christian imagery. These buildings were highly visible and the symbols they displayed said something about their ethos, be that a statue of a family or an angelic knight in armour. They all tried to communicate something to passers by of what was going on inside their buildings. Given the original debates over Christian symbols attached to these buildings and Purdy's rejection of what he saw as archaic loaded messages, the churches have all had to reposition themselves in a changing cityscape.¹⁰⁶ To a modern audience their exteriors could appear bland. In a recent article in the *Oxford Historian* St Bartholomew's was felt to look more like a health centre than a church.¹⁰⁷ It is worth noting that it could be argued that not marking these buildings with any overt Christian identity could have been seen as a position of confidence, the personality of the life of the building being sufficient to demonstrate faith in action. However, as Newham had changed over the decades, with many more faiths taking their place in the streets of the borough, Christians have felt compelled to state their identity. St Bartholomew's, St Mark's, Forest Gate and St Mark's, Beckton and St Michael's all now have crosses on their buildings (Fig 5.1).

¹⁰⁶ Martin Purdy, 'The United Reformed Church, St Helens: A Continuing Approach Towards a Relevant Symbolism', in *Research Bulletin* (Birmingham: Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture, 1976), pp. 15-19, 18.

¹⁰⁷ Garnett and Harris, 'Sources of the Sacred', p. 17.



Figure 5.1 The cross outside St Bartholomew's, East Ham.
With the permission of the Rector and PCC of the East Ham Team Ministry.

St Bartholomew's very quickly placed an imposing wooden cross outside the building but took a further twenty years to settle on the wording used to describe the building, 'St Bartholomew's Church and Centre.' St Mark's, Beckton, used the Millennium as an excuse to erect a cross, although part of the popular mythology of the community was this was not possible before because the council would have objected.¹⁰⁸ Basic knowledge about religious culture has changed with a decline in what might be described

¹⁰⁸ Interview, Kellaway, 21 June 2011.

as symbolic literacy. The problem was what images could still be used in communicating Christian identity to the wider world by these buildings. All placed images on their buildings to convey a message. St Bartholomew's placed a statue of a family outside the centre. St Michael's commissioned a large image of St Michael slaying the dragon as part of its iconography. St Mark's, Forest Gate, put a plaque depicting two hands shaking, below a cross. St Mark's, Beckton, eventually erected a large cross outside their entrance. In an age where the understanding of the meaning of Christian symbols seems to be declining, St Michael's knight in shining armour was quickly misinterpreted by some in the community as St George. This unintentionally became a highly political statement in a predominantly Muslim area. More recently a cross has been placed next to the statue to state clearly that this is a Christian Church. The shared use of space has been something of a concern for some at Manor Park. The churchwarden, Madeline Clarke, felt that people knew the Froud Centre but did not think a church was part of the complex. The issue was further complicated when a church that rented space within the centre wanted to put a banner outside publicising their group and St Michael's refused.¹⁰⁹ A similar incident occurred at St Bartholomew's when the Kitchen Table wanted to advertise their project with a large banner and the PCC asked them to remove it.¹¹⁰ Ironically, St Bartholomew faces a different problem with its sculpture of a family. Commissioned to be placed outside the main entrance on the wall of the church the original aim was a statue that was to have no overt religious meaning; it was simply a family comprising a man, woman and young child (Fig 5.2).

¹⁰⁹ Interview, Clarke, 11 October 2011.

¹¹⁰ Interview, Cross, 26 August 2011.



Figure 5. 1 Sculpture outside St Bartholomew's, East Ham.
With the permission of the Rector and PCC of the East Ham Team Ministry.

Ironically, thirty years on, that non-religious message has been lost and for many the statue represented not any family but the Holy Family of Mary, Joseph and the infant Christ.¹¹¹ These Christian communities have been keen to display, on their buildings, images that represent their Christian identity, but there are fewer images they can choose from that readily and eloquently communicate that concept to all.¹¹² The growing reality is that, if a church wishes to mark its site in some way, the cross was increasingly the only commonly recognizable symbol available to it.

Outlook

One of the most significant ways that these Christian communities have changed is in their positive outlook for the future. Laurie Blaney, in research carried out in the early 1990, suggested that many clergy in Newham felt despondent and fatalistic about the future of their churches, particularly those working in the south of the borough.¹¹³ The clergy had little sense of purpose within the community and there was a feeling of constant decline. This contrasts sharply with the attitudes of the clergy and laity interviewed for this research. There was a near-universal sense that their Christian communities had something important and useful to contribute to the wider community, worship that was lively and relevant, and that they had a role in Newham life. One key factor in this is not just numbers attending but the age of the congregation. Inner-city congregations reflected a wider age range than their suburban neighbours, which pointed to a continuing future for the church. The congregations reflected a broad and more energetic constituent than their suburban neighbours. Brian Lewis said that he had members from infants to people in their nineties and this made him feel the Church had a future.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ The author of this thesis recalls that many in the congregation in the late 1990s assumed this was a statue of the Holy Family rather than the image of a family unit. Indeed by this stage in the life of Newham such traditional family units were becoming anachronistic and loaded with particular value systems that dated the image.

¹¹² See the views of the architect in Purdy, 'The United Reformed Church', p. 18.

¹¹³ Blaney, 'The Position and Practice of Anglicanism', p. 274.

¹¹⁴ Interview, Lewis, 11 August 2011.

In simply creating these spaces the congregations have felt revitalised. The leaders felt that the church may have survived even if the projects did not take place, but they would be poorer without them.¹¹⁵ These buildings have helped the communities engage in a continual process of reinvention that has had to accept the demise of traditional roles. As old conventions decline, such as the performance of baptisms and weddings, the church has sought new areas of mission. One clear expression of their vitality is the unwillingness to surrender to indifference and marginalization. Christians have a confidence in their place within Newham life that was missing in the 1970s and which other deaneries are still wrestling with. In the face of secularization the churches in Newham are positive about their futures and reject the notion of death and decay.¹¹⁶

What impact the developments have had on the wider Church?

Two significant ways these projects have influenced the wider Church have been through the literature they engendered and the churches in the diocese that emulated them and chose to redevelop. Most particularly, they have created a significant body of literature that is a resource for the Church, and have encouraged other deaneries in Chelmsford Diocese to develop some of their buildings. This began almost immediately. Stephen Lowe provided written evidence for the *Faith in the City* report and Newham Deanery itself made its submission and received a number of visits from Eric James. Lowe has been perhaps the most prolific in publishing his reflections on the St Bartholomew's project. Alongside a series of articles appearing in the *Bulletin*, the journal of church architecture published in Birmingham by J. G. Davies, as has been noted, he was also chair of a report, *Moral, But No Compass: Government, Church and the Future of Welfare*, for the Church of England on the relationship between state and Established Church in community-involvement. Although this report was not directly offering church buildings as a solution, it highlighted what it felt was the contribution the Church had made to welfare provision in the past and how consistently the state had overlooked that contribution.¹¹⁷ There is one section on the use of church buildings as community assets

¹¹⁵ Interview, Freeman, 13 June 2012.

¹¹⁶ Interview, Lewis, 11 August 2011.

¹¹⁷ Lowe, *Moral, But No Compass*, p. 95.

which indicates the significant level of involvement churches have had through their buildings.¹¹⁸ The report's recommendations encourage a stronger link between State-funded agencies, such as the Health Service, and the church. This echoes the pioneering work that Lowe developed in creating a partnership of Local Authority, Health Service and Church in the St Bartholomew's project.

In 2009 Stephen Lowe also published, in collaboration with Elaine Graham, *What makes a Good City?* This includes a substantial section written by Lowe reflecting on his experience of developing the St Bartholomew's project. What it offered was an apology for the churches' involvement in social action and the acknowledgement of the significant contribution the Church has made in funding such projects as St Bartholomew's.¹¹⁹ *What makes a Good City?* became an opportunity to present the thoughts of people like Lowe's on a wider canvas than just Newham.

Martin Wallace has been a successful author in the field of Celtic Spirituality, again drawing on the relationship between the natural world and the urban landscape. He has written *City Prayers* (1994), with a foreword by David Sheppard. As Bishop of Selby he produced a diocesan education resource, *Sermons in Stone* (Undated but c 2010). This, tellingly, asked churchgoers to examine the messages that their church buildings were presenting to the world. These 'sermons in stone' may have been saying something very different to the message the Church actually wanted to communicate. The course looks at ten issues related to Church buildings. Very clearly, Martin Wallace has drawn upon his experience and the insights gleaned from the St Mark's redevelopment to produce this resource for York Diocese. It is particularly interesting to note the questions asked of participants. 'What sort of God does the outside appearance of your church currently suggest to those who walk or drive past?' 'What are the activities that currently take place in your church building?' 'What are the current needs which could be met better if your church building was different?'¹²⁰ These were exactly the questions asked of the

¹¹⁸ Lowe, *Moral But No Compass*, p. 76.

¹¹⁹ Graham and Lowe, *What Makes a Good City?* p. 137ff.

¹²⁰ Martin Wallace, *Sermons in Stone: Diocese of York A Way Ahead* (York: The Max design and Print Co., c2010), p.13, 17, 19.

developments in Newham in the 1980s. The course encourages local churches to look again at their buildings, in the light of their needs and resources and ask how they might be better adapted to the future mission of the Church.¹²¹

After his doctoral thesis Martin Purdy was to produce a guide book for church redevelopment in *Churches and Chapels: A Design and Development Guide* (1991). This was effectively the theory and process of how St Bartholomew's, St Mark's, Forest Gate and St Michel's, Little Ilford, were developed. In the work Purdy expands on his theories around the problems of Church architecture, the needs of the client and the potential service that church buildings can offer the wider community. He uses the example of St Mark's, Forest Gate. Purdy outlines a blueprint of how to redevelop your church and the publication is aimed at those churches that want to open their buildings to wider community use. That sense of service that was so important to St Bartholomew's identity is clearly articulated; 'Today, the mainstream congregations of Western Churches place great emphasis upon the servant role of a caring, sharing Christianity, integrating sacramental worship and study of the world with community-involvement.'¹²² Central to his process is teasing out the voice of the local Christian community.

These publications have offered a significant resource to the wider church that has a more inclusive approach to a church building complex. More commonly, authors such as Giles, in his work *Re-pitching the Tent*, have really only concentrated on the worship site. They have indicated that with the success of these buildings it was thought fruitful to publish individual church leaders' insights and reflections on their experience of redeveloping their churches. The influence of these projects has thus been disseminated to a wider audience and some useful resources have been developed for those churches that wished to explore ministry along community-involvement lines.¹²³

¹²¹ Wallace, *Sermons in Stone*, p. 27.

¹²² Martin Purdy, *Churches and Chapels: A Design and Development Guide* (London: Butterworth Architects, 1991), p. 11.

¹²³ Wallace, *Sermons in Stone* used by York Diocese as a manual for reordering church premises.

Alongside the literature that these projects develop themselves it would be worth examining one of the most recent Church of England reports on church building to indicate how prophetic the Newham developments were. In 2004 the Church of England published *Building Faith in our Future*. This document was born out of a concern for the future of church buildings and how vital a part they have played in their local communities' lives above and beyond that of worship. Interestingly their anxiety regarding repair and maintenance was exactly that of the Church in Newham in the 1970s.¹²⁴ The report is wider than just churches in Urban Priority Areas and covers heritage sites and cathedral, but it does examine churches in poorer communities.

The report outlines the significant impact that church buildings can have in providing areas of community regeneration. The work states that, far from being a minority interest, many people who have no close affiliation to a denomination have much time and admiration for the work of the Church.¹²⁵ Indeed these buildings have earned grudging respect from those who could have been their harshest critics. The report appeared at a stage in the debate when the then Labour Government was publically debating the contribution faith communities could make to wider society. As such much of its recommendations were a plea to reduce the administrative burden church sites had to contend with through government legislation. The report outlined the work that many churches were involved in that was often overlooked and undervalued.¹²⁶ The section on the Urban Challenge could have been a potted description of the context Newham clergy found themselves in thirty years before. Although the report does not make direct reference to Newham, it makes clear that developments like those in Newham were exactly the good practice they wished to publicise to wider society and government agencies.

Another sign that these churches were successful was how much they influenced and encouraged other churches to emulate them. How has the wider church adapted and redeveloped its buildings? Looking at Appendix 5, we have a breakdown of each parish

¹²⁴ Anon, *Building Faith in our Future* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004), p. 3.

¹²⁵ Anon, *Building Faith in our Future*, p. 17.

¹²⁶ Anon, *Building Faith in our Future*, p. 45.

in Newham today reflected the level of adaptation of their sites they have experienced over the last thirty years. Out of the twenty-five parish churches in Newham that still exist, nine churches have completely rebuilt their church and church halls, creating integrated complexes, and six have substantially re-ordered their sites effectively to create a new space within their build. The last of these was St Mathias, Canning Town, a small church and community centre. This was the final Newham project APEC were involved in and opened shortly after St Mark's, Beckton. It was a dual role worship space with community facilities that provided a social base on a very limited scale in an area of significant deprivation. More radically, St Edmund's, Forest Gate, sold its church site and redeveloped the vicarage, creating a worship space, flat for church worker or curate and a small number of community rooms. St Luke's, Canning Town, is the most recent redevelopment which created a church in the heart of a Church of England Primary School enabling the worship space to double up as the assembly room (Fig 5.3).



Figure 5.3 St Luke's, Canning Town.

The author's collection.

The Ascension, Victoria Dock so substantially re-ordered their church site in the midst of a significant redevelopment of the parish that it is a rebuild in all but name. Significantly, they chose to retain the outward shell of the building to indicate that the Church had not left the area but was still present and recognizable to the wider community.

Of the remaining churches in Newham, nine have not substantially altered their buildings and it is significant to note that three of these are the ancient parish churches comprising East and West Ham and Little Ilford. Given the major restrictions on any redevelopments around listed buildings it is no surprise that these sites have substantially been unaltered. Those others were either churches that were built in the inter-war years or were post-war rebuilds of bomb damage churches. These were designed with community facilities already included - substantial separate halls, offices space and kitchens and toilets. The remaining eight churches have undergone some noteworthy reordering of their sites, often reducing their worship space by partitioning off part of the church and creating community facilities as a result of the extra space like Emmanuel, Forest Gate, which divided part of their nave and created a new hall.

The influence of these redevelopments has reached out to other parts of Chelmsford Diocese. If one looks beyond Newham to other deaneries in the West Ham Archdeaconry there are a small but significant number of churches that have gone through substantial or total rebuilds. Looking at Newham's neighbouring deaneries of Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Redbridge and Waltham Forest there are sixteen churches that have either rebuilt their sites or significantly reordered internally. Table 5.3 lists each deanery in the London region of Barking Episcopal area and the number of churches that have significantly altered their buildings or completely rebuilt.

Table 5.3: FIVE DEANERIES IN EAST LONDON LISTING THE NUMBER OF PARISHES AND THE NUMBER OF REDEVELOPED SITES WITH A PERCENTAGE OF WHOLE.

Source: Table compiled by the author from data obtained through interviewing Deanery clergy.

Deanery	No. Parishes	No. Redevelopments	Percentage
Barking and Dagenham	15	5	25
Havering	24	3	11
Newham	25	9	26
Redbridge	22	6	21
Waltham Forest	23	3	12

This does indicate that the experience in Newham was not seen as a failure. In fact nineteen percent of the churches in these boroughs have undergone some form of significant reordering over the past thirty years. Where substantial redevelopment has taken place the community facilities mirror projects like St Bartholomew's very closely. Sadly, there is little surviving evidences of the theological process these churches went through to achieve their goals. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the deanery to have the most redevelopment after Newham, as a percentage of the total number of churches is the predominantly urban Barking and Dagenham. Five churches have significantly reordered their premises one of which has rebuilt its complex. Given that Barking and Dagenham grew up as a community in the inter-war years and thus many of the churches were built with substantial halls, it is significant that this number of churches, out of fifteen, have redeveloped their sites in the last thirty years. Conversely, Havering, which is the most affluent and suburban of deaneries, has only three churches that have undergone redevelopment, two complete rebuilds and a third that has substantially reordered its site. It is Redbridge and Waltham Forest that are the surprise in these statistics. Redbridge, as a wealthy, suburban area of East London, one would assume would not need to adapt its buildings, but in fact six churches in the borough have gone through significant rebuilds. The most recent is the redevelopment at All Saints, Woodford Wells. This is the most suburban, wealthy and one of the best attended churches is the West Ham Archdeaconry. It has spent over three million pounds on a new complex of community buildings that

aims to provide facilities for its church and community.¹²⁷ At least one of these redevelopments in Redbridge was influenced by St Bartholomew's, as the incumbent of St Luke's, Great Ilford, a former team vicar in East Ham, created a small community centre as part of a regeneration project in South Ilford.

Waltham Forest, by contrast, a deanery with substantial areas of deprivation, has had little redevelopment of its parishes. Only three churches have undergone substantial redevelopment. The most ambitious project was the newly-built Cornerstone Church. This was a community centre and church in the heart of Leytonstone, formed out of two adjoining parishes.¹²⁸ The creation of Peter House Community Centre as part of St Peter's in the Forest's complex was developed on the old vicarage site. This replaced an old nineteenth century vicarage with a community hall and doctors' surgery. The only church in Waltham Forest that has undergone a substantial internal reordering was St John's, Walthamstow, which split the large Victorian church in two, creating a first floor that served as the worship space and a downstairs set of community buildings.

These redevelopments indicate that when Newham experimented, Chelmsford was happy to encourage emulation beyond its boundaries. This gives some indication that the developments in Newham were seen by the wider Church as appealing. One significant reason that there has not been greater redevelopment may be due to a reduction in funding streams now open to churches for such initiatives. It is telling that it is in the most affluent areas of the Archdeaconry, Redbridge and Havering, that churches have been able to afford costly rebuilds, or in the most deprived parts of the area such as St Luke's, Ilford, or the Cornerstone, Leytonstone that money has been made available to develop these projects. Many churches fall into the trap of being neither too wealthy to shoulder such a project nor too poor to attract outside funding.

¹²⁷ *Wanstead and Woodford Guardian*, 22 September 2009.

¹²⁸ See their website thecornerstone.org.uk.

Old Rivals

A further measure of success is to place the achievements of the Church of England in Newham alongside other organizations. The reality has been that many voluntary, communal organizations have faced decline. The public house was often assumed to be central to a community and thus, unfairly, a measure to assess the success or failure of the Church.¹²⁹ Significantly, the public house, seen to be such a threat to male Victorian religious identity, has fared badly in Newham. The *London Kelly's Directory* for 1974 listed over 140 public houses in Newham; in the *London East Phone Book* for 2009/10 there were less than fifty listed.¹³⁰ The reasons for the decline in the number of public houses included the growth of home entertainment, the availability of cheaper alcoholic drinks in supermarkets and off-licenses, the increase in restrictions on drinking and driving and the ban on smoking in public buildings. Evidence suggests, that the root cause has been a change in drinking culture in England with the end to heavy industry that provided a workforce of regular pub goers. The change from an exclusive male culture, evening entertainment and even bar food has been cited as causes of decline in public house numbers.¹³¹

The cinema was once perceived by some churchgoers to be a significant rival for the attentions of potential adherents.¹³² Rex Walford noted the emphasis placed on popular entertainment by cultural historians whilst ignoring the greater impact churches made on their communities.¹³³ He noted they were more interested in Shirley Temple than William Temple.¹³⁴ If they were genuine rivals to church-going they had evidently lost that battle in Newham by the closing decades of the century. The cinema as a cultural phenomenon collapsed in the borough. In 1974 there were only four cinemas listed in

¹²⁹ Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society*, p. 23.

¹³⁰ Kelly's, *Directory for 1974 and The Phone Book, London East 2009/10*. BT (London: Kelly, 1974). Jennings noted that at its height in the 1870s there was a public house for every 200 of the population. This was to drop to one pub for every 800 people by 1971. Jennings. *The Local. A History of the English Pub*. p. 212.

¹³¹ Paul Jennings, *The Local: A History of the English Pub* (Stroud: Tempus, 2007), p. 224 .

¹³² Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society*, p. 39.

¹³³ Walford, "As by magic"; the growth of 'New London', p. 8.

¹³⁴ Walford, "As by magic"; the growth of 'New London', p. 3.

Newham in *Kelly's*.¹³⁵ By 1990 there were no cinemas left in the borough, whereas once every high street boasted an Empire or Odeon. Like redundant churches their sites were converted into other uses. This situation was not to change substantially until an old cinema, the Boleyn on Barking Road was returned to its original use, this time specialising in Bollywood movies for a growing, resident audience from Asia.¹³⁶ This has some interesting parallels with church attendance. It could be presumed that Bollywood films were available to rent or buy on videotape at the time, although rarely seen on television. This was not enough for a growing constituency in Newham who wished to experience the films communally. Fascinatingly, it could be argued that a community was preserving the cinema because they maintained a corporate sense of identity in much the same way that new communities were enlivening church attendance. It could be assumed that a group that still valued communal worship, also saw the benefits of seeing their film stars with a wider audience. In the light of decline in communal activities like the pub or cinema the Anglican churches have survived remarkably well.

Conclusion

Many of the aspirations of these community entrepreneurs who built these churches and centres seemed still to be being met twenty years on. In an age when decline is all too evident, near stability in numbers, evident in Newham, is no mean achievement, and one that could be said to have been aided by these creative building initiatives. The membership of Newham Anglican churches was to change significantly over those twenty years. All those interviewed noted the change in ethnic make-up of the Anglicans in their churches. This change has been so substantial that in some cases the majority of Anglicans are now from black and ethnic minority groups.¹³⁷

Adherence to church traditions, such as the rites of passage, has also declined. Both weddings and baptisms have become less common amongst non-churchgoers, although a funeral conducted by a Christian minister is still the norm for those who express even the

¹³⁵ Kelly's, *Directory for 1974*.

¹³⁶ See their website; www.boleyncinema.com.

¹³⁷ Interview, Palmer, 29 July 2011.

most perfunctory allegiance to Christianity. This may not indicate a decline in belief, but simply a further decline in commitment to an organized religion amongst the settled white population.¹³⁸

Anglican parish life has changed. There are concerns about the struggle to find volunteers and these buildings are increasingly dependent on paid employees. Yet they have recreated a role for themselves in the borough and they have maintained a strong Christian identity in the faces of fresh challenges. Money seems no longer to be a problem for many of them, so this liberates clergy and laity to concentrate on mission. The centres are lively attractive buildings that are holding on to significant numbers of worshippers. In contrast to their wealthier neighbours Newham is more than holding its own. In further contrast to secular institutions, like the pub and cinema, it has outlasted both. They have, through literature, inspired further developments beyond their boundaries.

If one looks at the response of those interviewed in 2010, many of the clergy and laity are positive about their futures. There is a vibrancy in the life of these churches. Brian Lewis felt that his congregation was not large, but its age range, unlike its suburban contemporaries, was mixed. It attracted the young and families into it. St Mark's, Forest Gate, felt that its numbers had reached a plateau that meant it was still strong enough to engage with community projects like the parent and toddler group.¹³⁹ If the complete picture of Newham Anglican life cannot be measured in terms of electoral rolls or account sheets. The books that were inspired by these developments and the attitudes of its lay and ordained leadership to the future, points to a sense of optimism that the Church of England will survive in Newham.

¹³⁸ Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 53 indicated the decline in rites of passage such as baptism as a significant measure of its strength amongst the general population.

¹³⁹ Interview, Stow, 3 August 2011.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have raised further doubts about the definitive conclusion that Christianity, and more particularly the Church of England, is finally in its death throes in this country. Following in the footsteps of other Church historians from McLeod to Walford once again a very specific area was examined in detail, the London borough of Newham. This thesis concentrated on the closing decades of the twentieth-century, the assumed high point for decline, but moved the story on a generation from their research. What is revealed is a more complex narrative than one might assume. This narrative focuses on how one denomination transformed the open wound of failing buildings into a mission tool for the future. A story is uncovered of a theological approach that underpinned these ventures that raise them above mere expediency.

In the Introduction an outline of the secularization debate was presented. It had in the past been assumed the Church had lost its battle with secularization due to the irresistible march of urban, industrial society in the West. So persuasive was this theory that little serious criticism of it manifested itself for over a hundred years. Although dates for a definitive point of decline were to shift further away from the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, religious decline and urban growth were felt to be inevitably intertwined. Even the Church seemed to have accepted this analysis. The work of Edward Wickham pointed to a fundamental inability of the Church of England to hold on to the industrial working classes.¹ He accepted the sorry analysis of nineteenth century commentators who adopted a very narrow definition for piety. This was one that the masses did not participate in and fulfilled the elite Victorians' own pessimistic and negative attitudes to urban, working class, culture.

However, by the 1970s a fresh look at what was defined as religiosity and an increasingly nuanced study of particular geographical areas indicated a more complex landscape for secularization and the proletariat. Works by authors, such as Hugh McLeod, revealed that

¹ Edward Wickham, *Church and People in an Industrial City* (London: Lutterworth, 1957).

the working class in Lewisham and Bethnal Green experienced and shaped religious life.² They showed that far from a blanket ignorance or indifference towards organized religion urban people associated with it at a number of differing levels. It also revealed that some working-class communities felt drawn to differing Nonconformist denominations and that the social dimension of religion and its pastoral activities still held meaning for the city dwellers. Moreover, rites of passage could command a healthy commitment even if habitual attendance on Sundays was unpopular. This research opened the door to further study that revealed that class, gender, variety of association and personalised religion or folk religion centred on the individual all indicated a lively, if unorthodox, religious culture. Work by Sarah Williams revealed the testimonies of working-class people themselves through oral history, and the panoply of religious rituals that Gorer and Wilkinson indicated aided those facing crisis, particularly the crisis of war.³ Historians such as Green, Morris, and Smith all pointed to Britain having a significant religious identity before the Second World War that included the church in the inner-city.⁴

However, it was in the decades after the Second World war the crisis seemed to be truly manifest. Callum Brown presents the case for the 1960s being the point of irreversible decline, which he provocatively described as the death of Christian Britain.⁵ That the convergence of a growing empowerment of women who, for Brown, were in the Victorian era, custodians of religious life, and their subsequent liberation in the 1960s, meant Britain moved its language, values and concern away from traditional Christian religion. Although he somewhat revised this argument in later works, the theory now presented was that secularization occurred in the country rapidly and within living memory.⁶ He argued that we were culturally no longer a Christian nation because faith was, in Brown's words, no longer 'marbled' throughout our country's identity.

² Hugh McLeod, *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City* (London: Croom Helm, 1974).

³ Sarah Williams, *Religious Belief and Popular Culture in Southwark c.1880-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), Geoffrey Gorer, *Exploring English Character* (London: The Cresset Press, 1955).

⁴ S. J. D. Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline: Organisation and experience in industrial Yorkshire, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Jeremy Morris, *Religion and Urban Change, Croydon 1840-1914* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1992), M. A. Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society: Oldham and Saddleworth, 1740-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

⁵ Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding secularisation 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2001).

⁶ Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 30.

Given that much of this sense of religion has been skewed by a Christendom model of religion, offering little space for diffuse religious practice, there have been wide gaps in the research into secularization. Little time has been spent examining the impact of new Christian denominations and non-Christian communities, or what religious identity people claimed for themselves within the privacy of their interior lives. Disconcertingly the last hundred years have seen a growth in what Grace Davie was to call ‘belief without belonging’ which has added to the complexity of the spiritual identity of the nation.⁷

Old centres of what were thought of as godless communities, the industrial inner cities, were now manifesting a very different narrative. Even so, if secularization was irreversible and decline most marked in the post-war era, the city was still expected to demonstrate the clearest evidence of this demise. It was just at this point that in Newham at least, the Church of England initiated a process of renewal and reinvigorated mission, centred on its church buildings.⁸ It refused to withdraw from this context and lavished time, energy and money into clawing back something of that lost community role. Despite its own fears of collapse, a new model of inner-city mission seemed to have been found and one that had a theological rather than just an expedient foundation based on the work of J. G. Davies.⁹ This theology refused to accept the narrow confines that religion had been squeezed into in the modern era. All aspects of the life of the Church, most especially its community work, were perceived to be signs of the Kingdom of God. This thesis presents a historical narrative that traces the origins of this approach and theology, and the story of how the Church of England in this part of East London strove for meaning, relevance and survival at a time when they should have been in full blown retreat.

The study chooses this discreet area of East London in the borough of Newham partly because it is often overlooked as a part of the East End, yet it is in many ways better

⁷ Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 94.

⁸ London, SBCA, Martin Purdy, ‘Parish of East Ham with St Alban’s Upton Park. Research Report’ 75/2/WH. October 1975. p. 43.

⁹ J. G. Davies, *The Secular use of Church Buildings* (New York: Seabury Press, 1968).

suited to represent the changing faces of the inner-city and the nation. As a fresh avenue of research it reveals that what it confronted in the post-war era mirrors what Britain, as a whole, experienced. It had the mammoth task of rebuilding after the devastation of war, including the dilemma that churches faced as they underwent post-war reconstruction. The creation of a welfare state offered fresh challenges as the leading player in voluntary sector work, the Church, lost its power and status.¹⁰ Social changes were taking place that owed their origins to the propaganda of the Second World War as the common man, exemplified by the chirpy Cockney, became something of a heroic figure. This in turn was to lead to an increasing democratization of attitudes that the Church was required to participate in and perhaps encouraged the collapse of Brown's concept of protocols, possibly only ever espoused by the once powerful elite.

Alongside this, most crucially for authors such as Callum Brown, the role of women was changing as they were drawn back into the workforce after a brief return to domesticity that the peace brought.¹¹ He argued that this enabled them to be financially liberated to choose alternative leisure pursuits from Church, with a growing expectation that they shoulder the financial burden of being a joint breadwinner for the home. In reality this liberation led a number of women in Newham churches to seek fulfilment in the responsibility and challenge that leadership in the Church offered and, in some few cases, seek equal status, most notably ordination, with their male counterparts.¹² Despite these vicissitudes the churches remained positive about the potential for the future.

Newham was to face significant decline as the century closed. Already a place of known deprivation the area was to slump further as Britain moved into a post industrial age. The most marked signs of this in the borough were the closure of the Docks and the repositioning of many old industries and in East Ham the end to the Beckton Gas Works with the arrival of natural gas.¹³ If the community was to struggle with decline the churches faced many of the same problems. At a point at which Brown argued the

¹⁰ Gladys Barrett, *Blackfriars Settlement a Short History 1887-1987* (London: Blackfriars Settlement, 1987), p. 22.

¹¹ Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 131.

¹² Interview, Steward, 8 March 2010.

¹³ Jerry White, *London in the Twentieth-century: A City and Its People* (London: Penguin 2002), p. 75.

Church was in terminal decline many Christians in the borough would have reluctantly concurred with this diagnosis. However, given the dire straits of the council, any ally including faith-based organizations, was better than none. The council still felt able to invite the churches to discuss the hopes for regeneration in Beckton. The Church of England was willing to respond to the call for partnership with the state sector in providing welfare projects.¹⁴

To add to the complexity of the issue, Newham was becoming home to a new generation of Christians who owed their allegiance to the independent Protestant denominations popular in North America, the Caribbean and new faiths from Asia and Africa. They were to find one of the few welcoming presences in their new home from the local church, as the resident Christians struggled with a concern for their new neighbours and kindred souls in the many independent churches that made a home in Anglican church halls.¹⁵

Population shifts were quite dramatic in the period from before and after the war. This was to cause further decline, not least amongst the local churches, but this East End diaspora was to spread the influence of Newham across the Home Counties. A romantic nostalgia for the old East End would vie with a sense of thanks people had of escaping the slums as negative perceptions of East London grew within British culture.

The convergence of industrial decline and immigration highlighted the poverty that was growing in the borough and a key symbol of this was the substandard quality of existing housing coupled with the paucity of quality new homes in the borough. Like the community, Newham's Anglican churches were struggling with an aging plant that seemed no longer fit for purpose for contemporary Christian mission.¹⁶ Critical as the Church was with any community regeneration that failed to take into account the views

¹⁴ Anon, *The Beckton District Plan* (London Borough of Newham, 1980), p. 56.

¹⁵ *Newham Recorder*, 15 March 1973, p. 64.

¹⁶ Interview, Whitwell, 16 June 2011.

of local people it became prominent as an agency that redeveloped its own plant.¹⁷ In replacing these symbols of decay the Church displayed an energy, skill and concern that could have been presumed to have long since vanished. Rejecting notions of decline it renewed its church-plant and in the process renewed its self image, creating a role for itself as the provider of community venues throughout the borough.

What is revealed in this research is these initiatives were not a cynical ploy to attract cash and hold on to it failing power in the borough. Instead a theology of service that had been developing since the early community ventures of the settlements and missions would underpin this renewal that was genuinely radical.¹⁸ It was an attempt to reposition faith back into the heart of a community. With the publication of *Faith in the City*, Newham and the diocese were to have a further boost to what they were already taking a lead on, a fresh mission to the inner-city.

In Chapter Two this work explored the debt local churches owed to the settlement and mission movement of the late nineteenth century. West and East Ham had more than their fair share of these establishments as they sought to alleviate the perceived wrongs of contemporary industrial life before the welfare state was established. These ventures became the seed bed for fresh forms of social engagement by Christians, a place to seek to learn from local people and a laboratory for a theology of social engagement. This was to prove critical as a foundation for the developments that followed by congregations in the post-war era.

Like the wider church these settlements had to renegotiate their role in a changing world of state-backed welfare provision. They had to accept an auxiliary role and were no longer the leaders and guarantors of quality.¹⁹ Again, like the local churches, these centres faced the arduous task of rebuilding in the aftermath of devastation from the

¹⁷ Jim Thompson, *Docklands Redevelopment: a Moral Dimension* (London: The Docklands Forum, 1989), p. 10.

¹⁸ London, SBCA, Martin Purdy, 'Parish of East Ham with St Alban's Upton Park. Research Report' 75/2/WH. October 1975. p. 43.

¹⁹ Jane Lewis, *The Voluntary Sector, the State and Social Work in Britain. The Charity Organisation: Society Family Welfare Association Since 1869* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1995), p. 3.

Blitz. Yet despite these vicissitudes it seemed that they adapted quickly and, despite some misgivings about their future, were carving a role out as experimental centres that enriched the local community's life and were important supplements to state funded welfare provision.²⁰

Strategically, it was at the point of crisis for the churches, the late 1950s and early 1960s that the gaps in welfare provision seemed to be more evident and poverty was increasingly being recorded in the life of the borough.²¹ This important, faith-based, wing of the voluntary sector was now recognized as far from redundant.

Churches in turn became centres where attitudes to poverty, the poor and faith were undergoing a transformation. They were able to challenge the class divisions that had been such a feature of the old settlement movements, as they needed to respond to locals' needs. New leaders were found that came from varied backgrounds and experiences that mirrored those of the clients they worked with.²² In turn the management of these sites was increasingly expected to reflect local people's voices, not just those of separate elite. This did not mean that class barriers ended in an instant, but those who came to work in the borough reflected an attitude that they did not personally hold all the solutions to Newham's problems. These were places that asked for participation by locals and a growing democratization of management. These were to prove invaluable experiences for local church as they sought to redress just such social barriers. The settlements in fact offered a training ground for clergy who tested their mettle and vocation in such a hothouse.²³

The work of these centres was not always easy and youth work often consisted of work alongside adolescents on the edge of society. Faith was still an important component of the service offered but there was a growing sense that Christian service and witness came

²⁰ Maria Brenton, 'The Voluntary Sector in British Social Services', in *Social Policy in Modern Britain* ed. by J. O. Campling (Harlow: Longmans, 1985), p. 23.

²¹ Brian Abel-Smith and Peter Townsend, *The Poor and the Poorest. A new analysis of the Ministry of Labour's Family Expenditure Surveys of 1953-54 and 1960* (London: G Bell and sons, 1965).

²² David Sheppard, *Steps Along Hope Street. My Life in Cricket, the Church and the Inner City* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2002), p. 42.

²³ London, Marchant Archive, *The Log of the Mayflower*, Spring 1961.

in many forms, some of which did not require a heavy-handed approach to sharing the Gospel. Again this was an important point of connection with churches that sought to create a role in their communities that was accessible to locals but was realistic about what it could achieve. Service and the healing effects of community work were seen as part of a collection of values that were perceived to reflect the Kingdom of God. This theological approach was to be further enhanced by the writings of J. G. Davies as his pupils worked on church community developments in the borough from the 1970s.²⁴

Through a series of interrelationships these community projects were able to offer support and justification for the growing number of churches that wanted to develop their premises along similar lines and there were close ties formed between the old settlements and missions and the Church of England in the borough. The first expression of this collaboration and thinking and the most complex was St Bartholomew's Church and Centre, East Ham.

St Bartholomew's grew out of a crisis that seemed to validate the assumptions of authors such as Callum Brown, that the Church was in dire peril by the close of the twentieth-century. All the predictions of the fate of the Church of England were felt to be demonstrable in the East Ham Team of the mid-1970s.²⁵ Yet for those who ministered there in the 1970s the crisis was not an excuse for Christians to abandon the inner-city, but to increase its efforts. Thanks to the imagination of its clergy such as Stephen Lowe, East Ham began a campaign to renew itself. Conversely at this point of near collapse the vitality of the Church was evident in its lay and ordained leadership. Key figures such as Lowe and the architect Martin Purdy, alongside a largely willing congregation, sought to create a new style of Church of East Ham. Nor did this seem to be a process of bulldozing through changes. The parish and deanery were to initiate a series of training programmes aimed at widening people's horizons and explaining the need and theology behind such a development.²⁶ Drawing heavily on the influence of J. G. Davies, and his concern that all activities within a church building should be understood to be

²⁴ Davies, *The Secular use of Church Buildings*, p. 236.

²⁵ London, SBCA, Information Sheet, 28 May 1982.

²⁶ Lowe, 'Church Building: Sign of Hope of Cause of Despair'.

expressions of God's work, the first projects wanted a theological underpinning to their mission.

New roles were sought for the laity. Despite the supposed decline in female participation in church life predicted by Brown, some of the key players in the St Bartholomew project were women. They were women who discovered a new identity thanks to the work of the churches.²⁷ Lowe was keen that as many people as possible could participate and share in the project, from the congregation itself to local user groups. New partnerships were formed with the state sector. This in itself was a significant change from the past where the state was wary of involvement with the voluntary sector. The project was to come at a strategic time for the local Authority and the Health Service as they needed to utilise the resource of the Church.

A theology that underpinned this work has survived in oral testimony, publications and the archives of the Church reflecting a new approach to the community work of the Church in the inner-city. It chimed in with a growing sense that God was to be seen as more approachable, more human almost, than images of power, majesty and otherness. The concept of holy was, for some, now immanent rather than ineffable. More importantly the holy was to be discovered in the most ordinary of occasions, mirroring the events of the life of Christ. The church was called to celebrate and support this new vision of God.²⁸ Service was to be the fresh role for the Church and these community centres were seen as valuable expressions of that service. The image of the Kingdom of God was to be a potent expression of this theology. This was to attempt to re-marble religion back into the life of people through the social, community and recreational life of these centres.²⁹

If there was a leadership that still felt confident enough to develop this project and a theological underpinning that was more than just shallow expediency, there was also a

²⁷ Interview, Steward, 8 March 2010.

²⁸ Martin Purdy, *Churches and Chapels: A Design and Development Guide* (London: Butterworth Architects, 1991), p. 11.

²⁹ Purdy, *Churches and Chapels*, p. 11.

significant level of respect that survived that enabled the Church to seek out new partners and fresh forms of funding to make this dream a reality. This denoted a more powerful and significant role for the Church at a point when it was assumed to be breathing its last. This project at East Ham was to inspire a generation of work by Anglicans in Newham that was to be boosted by the most significant report by the Church on the inner-city in the second half of the twentieth-century, *Faith in the City*, a report that sought to revitalise the inner-city and enabled the faith-based voluntary sector to reveal a role within late twentieth-century Britain that belayed notions of decline.

Chapter Four explored how this phenomenon was not an isolated incident, as St Bartholomew's became a model that was quickly emulated across Newham. Imaginative and dynamic clergy like the evangelical Martin Wallace were in conversation with APEC to repeat what East Ham had done in Forest Gate.³⁰ A number of churches were developed in Newham: St Mark's, Forest Gate, St Michael's, Little Ilford and St Mark's, Beckon. These initiatives were examined in detail because they reflect the diversity of approaches and Church traditions that were inspired by St Bartholomew's. A narrative was recovered that adopted St Bartholomew's style, but did not slavishly duplicate it, as new issues and opportunities shaped individual developments. Equally, a further challenge to the notion that Anglicanism was in terminal decline was the considerable success of *Faith in the City*. What might have been thought of as a marginal back-water of East London was stealing a march on the national Church. Indeed, there is strong evidence these developments in Newham had already begun and did not need *Faith in the City* to initiate them so advanced was their thinking. Instead it was to offer much-needed support to these projects but two of them were well under way when the report was published.

These projects responded to fresh challenges such as; the conservation of old buildings, the expectation buildings had to have a degree of comfort about them, the constraints of funding and safety and security as part of the design. There was a greater social variety amongst the clergy that meant leadership was less out of tune with a congregation's

³⁰ London, SBCA, Letters, Purdy to Wallace, 21 July 1983.

perceptions and needs. So respected was the St Bartholomew's project that the diocese actively encouraged local churches to repeat its approach. Significantly, the Church was confident enough in this approach to use St Bartholomew's model not just to replace worn out buildings but to plant a new parish church in the borough, in Beckton. Notably, thanks to a historical fund, London over the Border, and the newly established Church Urban Fund, money could be given to these projects to speed their development.³¹

The Church was willing to explore new ways of presenting its face to the world at large. Churches were increasingly concerned about what their buildings' architecture might communicate to society, in particular images of worldly power, authority and judgment. Even traditional symbols like the cross were played down. These new ventures sought to create inviting spaces and in the case of St Mark's, Forest Gate, literally to guide people into the heart of the church.³²

Remembering the burden that the old buildings bestowed on their future generations, these new spaces were required to be open, easily accessible, adaptable and welcoming.³³ They were to be flexible spaces that could be useful for many decades. Importantly there was numerical growth in church attendance in all these developments at the time. Churches like St Mark's, Forest Gate, had to revise their plans to accommodate a larger congregation. St Mark's, Beckton, grew considerably from its fragile beginnings in a portakabin.

These new spaces benefited the churches themselves. Their worship spaces were now conducive to experimentation in a way their gothic predecessors were not.³⁴ Worship could reflect changing needs and differing moods, from large celebrations to more intimate prayerful spaces, again with an eye to warmth and comfort. In an age where silence was becoming a scarce commodity these venues were offering to anyone who wished to access them a place to be still in a busy world. Liturgical experimentation and

³¹ Interview, Lowe, 18 March 2010.

³² Interview, Kemp, 15 August 2011.

³³ Interview, Wallace, 25 July 2011.

³⁴ Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

beauty were felt to be once again possible and the longed for panache that John Whitwell called for.

Success also came in the form of demand for spaces from a rich variety of community groups. It was felt that these buildings were once again at the heart of a neighbourhood.³⁵ This openness was to raise its own issues as these new centres grappled with the rising multi-cultural society that Newham was becoming. How far would or could these spaces go in including different groups? Limitations in canonical regulations meant that there were restrictions placed on offering their worship sites to the new denominations coming into the area such as the black led Pentecostal churches. There were also reservations about the use of Christian buildings for worship by other faith communities. Yet the community sides of the developments were encouraged to be as diverse as possible.

The churches themselves were discovering that as the borough became more culturally diverse institutions, such as schools, closed their doors on them, uncomfortable about the Christian influence they may exert on other faiths. As these avenues for mission and ministry declined the centres became fresh alternatives for engagement.

The heritage movement was growing in strength and these churches now had to justify demolition in contrast to adaptation.³⁶ This was in the context of growing demands for support and a reduced cash supply. Many of the churches that were redeveloped did so because they found no other means of sustaining their plant.

If an overt theological approach became harder to trace in these developments, welcome was still described as the key to what was to be achieved. Indeed, it could be argued that as old protocols that bound a society together were collapsing the churches in Newham were adopting new ones such as welcome and community.³⁷

³⁵ Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

³⁶ Ken Powell and Celia De La Hay, *Churches a Question of Conversion* (London: Save Britain's Heritage, 1987).

³⁷ These words regularly feature in the discourses of those interviewed for this thesis.

Churches were forging new partnerships with agencies such as Aston Charities and LDDC. Yet it was with the publication of *Faith in the City* that Chelmsford Diocese galvanised itself to support this one inner-city area. The energy and success of the Church Urban Fund and the Bishop's Appeal belie any suggestion of terminal failure or stagnation at this point. Newham itself became a flagship for CUF as it attracted senior clerical figures willing to share in the success of local projects.³⁸ In the case of St Michael's, *Faith in the City* provided a significant boost to its development in the faces of stiff opposition from the conservation lobby.

So successful were these developments that senior figures in the diocese now felt that the Church was reversing decades of decline and regaining lost ground.³⁹ So confident were they that they readily called for a new church for Beckton as this community grew. This could have been the point of disaster as the Church struggled to fulfil its ambitions for the site. There was a lack of local knowledge and an overly complex building that had an impenetrable administration thanks to the demands of numerous denominations who shared in this ecumenical project. With a lack of ownership from the growing congregation and clergy who felt ill-equipped to fundraise for expensive salaries, the venture was seen as overly ambitious. This was particularly so in the failure to solve problems of heating or security. Yet even in this area, after some considerable time the building was placed on a more realistic and firmer financial footing and is one of the most successful congregations in the borough with an electoral roll of ninety-two in 2009.

The question of success is at the heart of this research, mainly how successful have these buildings been in maintaining identity, relevance and service to the people of Newham? Do they challenge assumptions of secularization that have coloured attitudes to the inner-city since the nineteenth century? In examining how successful these buildings were in the decades after their completion one clear indicator for success was their usefulness. In contrast to the old sites that were no longer fit for purpose, these new centres were busy community hubs. There was a genuine belief that the decline that seemed to have been a

³⁸ *Newham Recorder*, 11 January 1987, p. 11.

³⁹ London, Fox Archive, Press Bulletin c 1988.

hallmark of inner-city religious life was actually halted. These new, modern, welcoming buildings were being used from morning till night.⁴⁰ This in turn gave a sense that the Church was becoming relevant to Newham peoples' lives once again. Despite the uncertainty and economic challenges of the 1980s, churches felt positive about their role once again. It was not just that these buildings were being used; they were paying their way. Sustainability was a key factor in these new developments. The problems of redundant plant and inadequate income to maintain or develop was a thing of the past.

Despite the changes of the proceeding decades many of these buildings are still well used. The work that takes place in them is every bit as diverse and lively as their first projects, and their adaptability in most cases has helped them stand the test of time. There have been some disappointments on the way: collaboration amongst some partners has not developed as some might have hoped, and some substantial parts of the centres such as the sports halls at St Michael's and St Mark's, Beckton, have not been used as well as other spaces. Even in some cases the hoped-for economies these new buildings were expected to achieve have not always been successful. However, these centres are hives of activity; the churches confront the issues of the community on a daily basis, enabling the Church to be a more visionary place than it was before.

Volunteers have been a consistent challenge with only one church, St Mark's, Forest Gate, successfully running the majority of the projects on their site by the congregation alone. In most cases where once there were volunteers, as in the coffee bar at St Bartholomew's, there are now paid staff. However, the idiosyncratic nature of the inner-city has led to some surprising talent being discovered, as in the case of the thoughtful and imaginative Kitchen Table project at East Ham.⁴¹

The quality and durability of the materials used has meant that even after twenty years few sites have faced large repair bills or substantial building work, in contrast to the

⁴⁰ Interview, Law, 20 June 2011.

⁴¹ Interview, Cross, 26 August 2011.

expensive and complex nature of their Victorian and Edwardian forbears.⁴² This has meant they have been able in some cases to amass substantial reserves that can ensure the survival of these buildings for the foreseeable future. One significant challenge has been the provision of salaries that in some cases have been too high for the individual churches' incomes to match. This was true in the case of St Mark's, Beckton. However, in more recent years, with some radical reorganising these problems have been solved.

Only St Bartholomew's and St Mark's, Forest Gate, had any substantial articulation of theology. Maintaining that vision as clergy came and went and even congregations changed in the fluid population of Newham, was a challenge. Some have found these buildings a benefit and others a burden at times. The wish to welcome people through hospitality has been fulfilled in most cases. The use of the church as quiet space and retreat from the bustle of life has been a real advantage of these buildings.

This does not mean that these centres have become exclusive Christian ghettos. The reality is that a further aim of these centres was to be inclusive of all residents. The membership of community groups using these buildings is many and various and reflects the multi-cultural nature of the community, as much as the present congregations do. Churches have struggled to accommodate other faiths' worship or study in their building.

If the inner-city church was expected to fail and truly mark the death of Christian Britain, two areas of decline should be most evident. Examining the widely held marker of failure, numerical decline, the evidence in Newham is surprising.⁴³ Given the decline in other parts of the diocese, Newham has resisted this failure and maintained a viable population of worshipping Christians.⁴⁴ The simple examination of the electoral roll figures for Newham over forty years indicates that decline has not been as pronounced in this borough as in the case of its suburban neighbour Havering. A further area of decline would be financial. The benchmark for this from a diocesan point of view could be construed to be the monetary contribution parishes were giving for wider Christian

⁴² Interview, Goodchild, 11 March 2010.

⁴³ Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 4.

⁴⁴ See Table 5:1 on page 224.

ministry, particularly stipends for clergy.⁴⁵ Here again, although the demands are not as onerous as they are for Havering, reflecting the relative poverty and affluence of each, Newham is not a burden on the diocese and contributes a significant amount of its income towards to stipends.

Identity is a further example of how strong or vulnerable these faith centres are. Many of the original community projects, the settlements and missions, have had to relinquish their Christian identity in the face of a more professional, religiously neutral stance, to ensure a sense of inclusion and guarantee funding.⁴⁶ The centres have negotiated this, some, as in the case of St Mark's, Forest Gate, remaining independent and thus ensuring a clear Christian ethos, others negotiating with their partners on how to present themselves.

Christian iconography, a concern of the original designers of St Bartholomew's and St Mark's, Forest Gate, has been interesting. Certainly these buildings have been confident in expressing their faith with overt Christian symbols, more so than Davies originally intended, but this display of faith has faced problems as fewer of the population can read these symbols for what they are.

More noteworthy is the change in attitude by local Christians in the last thirty years. Laurie Blaney noted how demoralised clergy were in Newham in the 1990s.⁴⁷ The oral evidence from this research dating from 2010 suggests both clergy and laity are more positive about their role and future in the borough. A more realistic attitude to numbers and the presence of young people in Church in Newham, contrasted strongly with those of suburban parishes. They offered hope for the future for Christians in Newham.

This attitude has enabled the influence of these buildings to be spread through the wider church thanks to publications, reports and the impact of individuals like Lowe and

⁴⁵ See Appendix 3 on page 274.

⁴⁶ See their own literature on their web site. Aston Mansfield Charities, <http://www.aston-mansfield.org.uk>.

⁴⁷ Laurie Blaney, 'The Position and Practice of Anglicanism in an Urban Priority Area, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Essex, 1996), p. 331.

Wallace who have taken on senior appointments in the Church of England. Reports such as *Building Faith in our Future* and *Moral, but no Compass* have reflected the good practice of Newham churches and in turn neighbouring deaneries have emulated their achievements and in a number of cases redeveloped their sites.⁴⁸ This may not be substantial, but one reason for this is the lack of funds that now halt such developments and the contentedness to use old plant for the present by some of these suburban parishes.

These buildings have been a unique experiment in urban mission. They have reflected energy and power that would have been assumed to have been long gone in the early decades of the twenty-first century. They suggest that the answer to the question of secularization is yet more complex than we might first think, even fifty years on from Wickham's famous treatise. Their creation offers glimpses into a rich religious world that inner-city Newham now reflects that will be worth further study.

The question arises what does the evidence of this thesis point towards: resurgence in religious life in Britain or a further indication of slow decline? The reality is that secularization is, as has been noted, a problematic word. The reality for modern twenty-first century Britain is that some aspects of British life have become increasingly secular whereas others indicated little movement in any direction. Some aspects of piety, such as church attendance are simple to map and others, such as the interior lives of individuals, almost impossible to predict. What this study has done is offer a further argument that secularization is not clear-cut. Newham has demonstrated evidence of a resurgence of religion in the public sphere it was retreating from after the 1940s. One aspect of this is the confidence churches now feel about their identity and place within Newham life thanks to the creation of a new mission tool, the church and community centre. These religious institutions have forged partnerships with outside agencies that indicate a level of gratitude and respect for their pastoral outreach. Even in that thorny issue of adherents Newham can claim its decline is not as marked as other parts of Chelmsford Diocese. These warm, welcoming, buildings that are easy to maintain have played a significant

⁴⁸ Anon, *Building Faith in our Future* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004), Stephen, Lowe, Chair, *Moral, But No Compass, Government, Church and the Future of Welfare* (Chelmsford: Matthew James Publishing Ltd, 2008).

part in drawing in and sustaining those adherents. The buildings come with a theology that grounds their community work in an approach, adapted from J. G. Davies and his followers, that genuinely seeks to rethink the sacred back into a religionless world.

McLeod examined no less than six aspects of potential secularization in industrial society.⁴⁹ The decline in individual beliefs and formal participation in organised religion were two that he found indicated clear evidence for decline in the West before the First World War. A conclusion today is a complex one given the anomaly of census data, which claimed belief without commitment and the fact that at least amongst Anglicans in Newham numerical decline was negligible. The evidence in this study favours an alternative conclusion that argues for an arrest in the growth of secularization in Newham. Moreover, if we consider religion in public institutions, public debates, identity and popular culture (other realms of potential decline according to McLeod), this research would suggest a strengthening of these arenas in the post-war period for Newham churches. This indicated resurgence by Christians in these areas, thanks to a renewal of its life and identity through its buildings. So multifaceted is the issue that any conclusion that has blanket implications for all multi-cultural and inner-city contexts would also be unhelpful. What this research does show is that in a fragmented, post-modern world, a specific area offers some remarkable data that challenges any notion of an all-prevailing trend in secularization. That religion cannot be categorised as a single entity like football, the pub or cinema where success and failure can be easily measured.

Further areas of study

There are several areas that have been left open for further research. This work has concentrated on the unique contribution the Church of England has made to the borough of Newham over the last fifty years as it shaped its role to shifting circumstances. In one sense the Anglican story was one that was too big to tell in conjunction with others. It occurred at a pivotal juncture in this denomination's history. Its relationship with the Thatcherite Government, the leadership of Robert Runcie, the publication of *Faith in the*

⁴⁹ Hugh McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe, 1848-1914* (London, Macmillan, 2000), p. 285.

City and the growing movement for the ordination of women to the priesthood captured popular imagination in a way that previous aspects of the reform of the Church did not. It stands alone as a significant reappraisal of the impact of secularization on the inner-city church.

Moreover, as an Anglican, the author has been in a privileged position to access documentation and personnel as an aid to research. It may not have been possible to have investigated other denominations to the same level even if their archives were accessible and surviving.

An additional question that could be asked is what direction the mission of the Church of England is now taking in urban areas? The reality is that Newham and the Diocese of Chelmsford have moved on since the heady days of the Church Urban Fund in the 1980s. It could be argued that the contemporary Church feels the inner cities have been seen to have had more than their fair share of exposure. There simply is no longer the funding available for substantial projects without the extensive input of individual parishes. Older funding bodies have ceased to operate; many of the original funders of the St Bartholomew's scheme simply do not provide such large sums of cash for individual developments, or have radically changed their criteria for grants. This appears to have nothing to do with the worth invested in Church ventures or the decline in respect for the Church, simply that these charities and grant awarding bodies no longer have the resources they once enjoyed. This does not mean that experimenting with fresh approaches to worship sites has ceased. Nor is there a sense that the Church of England has nothing more to offer the inner-city. It could be argued that the energy of the Church has outlived that of the grant awarding bodies.

Two recent developments of significance have been the shared use of a communal hall as a parish church by a local school and the use of shop front churches in busy market areas. St Luke's, Canning Town, as a church has recently been incorporated into a local Church of England Primary School.⁵⁰ In Walthamstow the Team Ministry there has established a

⁵⁰ www.stlukes16.co.uk.

base in Walthamstow High street, St Luke's, as part of their outreach.⁵¹ The motivation for such initiatives and their underlying theology would be a fruitful area of further research.

The Church of England is not the only denomination to have developed church community centres in Newham. A number of other churches have utilized their buildings for greater community use. There are a cluster of other redevelopments amongst the Free churches in the borough that would be worth considering in the light of these Church of England's developments. How influential the original Anglican initiative was in encouraging these projects, how theologically literate they were and how helpful they have been to the different denominations in challenging assumptions of decline would be worth exploring. Unlike their Anglican colleagues, these churches have felt a stronger association with the borough since the nineteenth century. West and East Ham were felt to be powerful centres of Nonconformity in the 1851 census. They have a reputation for being more socially engaged and more politically active amongst working class members. Did this follow through in an active community dimension to their ministry? There is evidence of a growing social engagement amongst new denominations. Glory House, an independent, Pentecostal church, recorded some social projects on their web page including a training programme for Christians and a prisoner support project.⁵² Alongside the older denominations it is clear new Christian groups such as these have made their home in the borough and have substantial congregations.⁵³

Alongside this, given the multi-faith nature of Newham, could be an examination of the community activities that other faiths' buildings undertake. This would have some significant merit in redressing an imbalance in research. In the last fifty years these faith communities have moved from accommodation in temporary shelters to expansive, purpose built worship sites. The ancillary work of these centres is rich and diverse, from supplementary educational establishments to the provision of food to the needy. Superficially much of this work seeks to reaffirm cultural identity for faith communities,

⁵¹ London, Author's collection, *Walthamstow Team Ministry, Purpose, Values and Profile*, p. 4.

⁵² Glory House web site: <http://gloryhouse.org.uk>.

⁵³ Glory House, 2 Tabernacle Place, Plaistow. E13 8EG.

but as these faiths take on a more established role within their communities this may be making way for a wider cultural and social impact. Food for the homeless, nursery provision and cultural activities all begin to look similar to the outreach initiated by the Victorian and Edwardian church of more than one hundred years ago. Indeed one could argue that this is a repetitious response by faith communities to the poverty that is still prevalent in the East End. The motivation behind such initiatives, their link with charitable aspects of religion, religious identity, and apologetics in a suspicious world and their theological narratives could offer a rich ground for work.

There could also be an examination of what might be described as secular buildings and the spirituality of space. With a burgeoning awareness of the impact buildings have on the emotional and physical health of individuals, there is a growing body of literature that seeks to understand good practice in design and planning. The psychological dimension to buildings could add to our understanding of place. Schools, hospitals, shopping malls and museums all have taken seriously the psychology of their architecture on visitors. What literature they created around this says about modern understandings of the spiritual or numinous could be rewarding.

There has been more than a sense of overlap between a spirituality of place and wellbeing, there has been a move towards a sense of the sacred for a de-sacral world. Popular authors such as Peter Ackroyd indicate the enthusiasm of such attitudes as the spirituality of place, the anamnesis of history in the repetition of historical events.⁵⁴ Iain Sinclair has also explored the significance of place in relation not just to buildings but even to a motorway.⁵⁵ In an age that might confidently articulate a secular dimension to life the sacred is re-emerging in fresh forms that undermine notions of a spiritual void in people's lives. This could offer further fruitful study in assessing the impact the physical world has on spirituality, wellbeing and a healthy society. Tragic events, associated with particular places, have been marked out in our society by temporary wayside shrines and are a further indication of the continuing need to spiritually and emotionally demarcate

⁵⁴ Peter Ackroyd, *London: The biography* (London: Vintage, 2001).

⁵⁵ Iain Sinclair, *London Orbital: A Walk around the M25*, (London: Granta Books, 2002) p. 16.

place. This is yet again a small area of inner-city Britain that could be researched to tease out the subtle alternative narratives that might add to our understanding of secularization in Britain.

The fate of the Church of England and Christianity itself is far from certain. There is every indication that the spiritual make-up of society at large is growing more complex. This complexity is further added to by the growing influence of the East and North America and their religious cultures. Far from religion retreating, it seems to be manifesting itself in more personal, individualistic forms, reflecting the prevailing culture, a personal religion that Grace Davie has described as belief without belonging. This is a religion that is often inarticulate and inconsistent, drawing on many spiritual forms from lucky charms to horoscopes and spiritualism. It is hardly the secular enlightenment predicted in the wake of declining organized religion. Despite this, there is still evidence for the need for organized religion as a component of our cultural life. This may have reached a plateau of decline and now be stabilising. Decline in attendance has not remained dramatically constant. More associational forms of organized religion are also evident in churches that can muster considerable numbers even if this does not have the strength of a national movement but is more of an independent local organization. Setting aside the significance of presenting global political power shifts in religious forms (the West versus Islam) Christianity has also a political dimension to it. Amongst some communal denominations there is also a growing politicization of religion that seeks to be a pressure group within society. With debates in the Church over gay relationships, divorce and abortion the past protocols that Brown marks as dead, for some Christians are still very much live issues. This politicization is now often centred on personal morality, a further indication of the residual power of organized religion. The Church of England still plays a not inconsiderable role in this as part of its establishment nature. The power and influence that this approach musters will be a source of concern and conflict amongst those who wish to see the demise of religious identity in the country, but points to a continuing influence, not its absence, in contemporary Britain. In a society that is struggling with a decline in community cohesion, as we feel that we are becoming more individualistic, faith communities, especially those like the small communal

congregations of Newham, are also being re-evaluated as a precious commodity. It is hoped that this work might offer some insight into the continuing contribution of Anglicans to social care and harmony and into the surprisingly successful and exciting mission they have had in the inner-city.

Appendix 1.

List of actors born or who grew up in Newham indicating the significance of Newham in popular culture from the authors own research¹.

Razaaq	Adoti	1973	Forest Gate	
David	Bailey	1938	East Ham	
Benjamin	Balance-Drew	1983	Forest Gate	
Honour	Blackman	1925	Plaistow	
Joe	Brown	1941	Plaistow	Lived
Peter	Byrne	1928	West Ham	
Kathleen	Byron	1921	East Ham	
Windsor	Davis	1930	East Ham	
Vera	Day	1935	Forest Gate	
Danny	Dyer	1977	Canning Town	
Chiwetel	Ejiofor	1977	Forest Gate	
Idris	Elba	1972	Canning Town	
David	Essex	1947	Plaistow	
David	Farrar	1908	Forest Gate	
Marty	Feldman	1933	Canning Town	
Perry	Fenwick	1962	Canning Town	
Bryan	Forbs	1926	Stratford	
Grea	Garson	1904	Manor Park	
Noelle	Gordon	1919	East Ham	
Roger	Griffiths	U/K	Stratford	
Terrance	Hardiman	1937	Forest Gate	
Carol	Harrison	1955	West Ham	
Stanley	Holloway	1890	East Ham	
Barrie	Keefe	1945	East Ham	
Stanley	Lebor	1934	East Ham	
Linda	Lewis	1950	West Ham	
Kenny	Lynch	1938	Custom House	
Vera	Lynn	1917	East Ham	
Malcolm	McFee	1949	Forest Gate	
Warren	Mitchell	1926	West Ham	
Glen	Murphy	1959	West Ham	
Bill	Murry	1941	Forest Gate	
Anna	Neagal	1904	Forest Gate	
Ricky	Norwood	1988	Forest Gate	Lived
Simon	Oates	1932	Canning Town	
Andi	Osho	1973	Plaistow	
Ron	Pember	1943	Plaistow	
John	Rapley	U/K	Lived in Newham	
Tegan	Summer	1972	Forest Gate	
Roberta	Taylor	1948	Plaistow	
Margaret	Tyzack	1931	West Ham	Lived
Reg	Varney	1916	Canning Town	
Ray	Winston	1957	Plaistow	

¹ The records of place and date of birth have been compiled by the author from various sources including biographies and internet sites.

Appendix 2

Settlements and Community Buildings in Newham Founded by Christians²

ANCHOR HOUSE, Roman Catholic. Barking Road, Canning Town. Founded 1962.

CANNING TOWN WOMEN'S SETTLEMENT, Originally Congregationalist. Cumberland Road, Plaistow. Founded 1892. Dissolved in 1968 and taken over by Aston Charities.

DURNING HALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY CENTRE, Unitarian origins but non-denominational. Forest Gate Founded 1953.

FELSTED SCHOOL MISSION. Anglican. Custom House. Founded 1880.

GIVEN-WILSON INSTITUTE. Anglican. West Ham. Founded 1912, closed early 1970's.

HARTLEY CENTRE, Anglican, Church Army. East Ham. Founded early 1900's.

HAROLD ROAD, Ecumenical. Plaistow. Founded 1970.

LAWRENCE HALL Cumberland Road, Plaistow E13 [on site of Canning Town Women's Settlement] Opened 1970.

MALVERN COLLEGE MISSION Cooper Street, Canning Town, E16 1894-1958 Dissolved in 1958 and became Mayflower.

MANSFIELD HOUSE UNIVERSITY SETTLEMENT Plaistow E13 founded 1889
Merged with Aston Charities to form Aston-Mansfield.

MAYFLOWER Cooper Street, Canning Town E16
Took over Dockland Settlement. David Sheppard leader
Now River Church

MISSION TO SEAMEN'S INSTITUTE Victoria Dock Road, Custom House E16 founded 1900.

ST HELEN'S HOUSE WOMEN'S SETTLEMENT Stratford E15 founded 1896.
Reconstituted after war as Dockland Settlement no 9.

TRINITY COLLEGE [OXFORD] MISSION Stratford E15 founded 1887-demolished after 1939-45 war.

WEST HAM CENTRAL MISSION Barking Road, Plaistow E13 1904

YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION 1906-1959

² With the permission of the Revd Dr Colin Marchant.

Appendix 5

List of Anglican churches in Newham and level of development over the past fifty years.

Parish Churches	Level of Development in last fifty years
St Cedd's, Canning Town	Closed
St Matthias, Canning Town	Complete rebuild
St Mary's, East Ham	Minor alteration
St Alban's, East Ham	Complete rebuild
St Bartholomew's, East Ham	Complete rebuild
St George's, East Ham	Minor alteration
St Paul's, East Ham	Substantial reordering
All Saints, Forest Gate	Minor alteration
Emmanuel, Forest Gate	Substantial reordering
St Edmund's, Forest Gate	Complete rebuild
St Mark's, Forest Gate	Complete rebuild
St Saviour's, Forest Gate	Minor alteration
St Matthew's, West Ham	Minor alteration
St Barnabas, Manor Park	Substantial reordering
St Michael's, Little Ilford	Complete rebuild
St Mary's, Little Ilford	Minor alteration
St John's, North Woolwich	Complete rebuild
St Philip and St James	Minor alteration
St Mary's, Plaistow	Closed and the reopened
St John's, Stratford	Substantial reordering
St James', Stratford	Minor alteration
St Paul's, Stratford	Substantial reordering
Ascension, Victoria Dock	Substantial reordering
St Luke's, Victoria Dock	Complete rebuild
All Saints, West Ham	Minor alteration
St Mark's, Beckton	Complete rebuild

Appendix 3

NEWHAM DEANERY		SHARE																	
		2002		2003		2004		2005		2006		2007		2008		2009		2010	
		Assessed	Total	Assessed	Total	Assessed	Total	Assessed	Total	Assessed	Total	Assessed	Total	Assessed	Total	Assessed	Total	Assessed	Total
			Paid		Paid		Paid		Paid		Paid		Paid		Paid		Paid		Paid
Plaistow Team		35,136.00	35,136.00	40,180.20	40,180.20	39,500.01	39,500.04	38,163.51	38,163.51	38,510.00	13,177.08	39,800.00	20,000.00	40,375.00	40,375.00	41,474.00	41,474.00	42,294.00	19,000.00
East Ham Team		27,813.00	27,812.00	31,391.00	31,391.00	32,936.00	32,936.00	32,303.70	32,630.04	31,691.00	31,691.04	31,782.00	31,782.00	31,052.32	31,052.32	32,511.60	32,511.60	31,796.88	31,796.88
East Ham St George		11,261.00	13,400.00	12,614.00	13,796.00	13,767.00	13,767.00	14,254.56	14,254.56	12,161.00	12,836.64	14,083.74	12,836.64	14,043.00	14,043.04	14,555.04	14,555.04	14,406.48	14,406.48
East Ham St Paul		20,153.40	20,153.40	22,381.92	22,381.92	23,668.92	23,668.92	22,897.68	22,897.68	22,294.80	22,294.80	23,244.21	23,244.24	23,778.84	23,778.84	24,715.32	24,715.32	25,347.00	25,347.00
Forest Gate All Saints		15,867.72	15,867.72	17,076.48	15,653.44	19,075.32	19,076.28	18,868.44	18,868.44	19,684.20	16,403.50	20,637.54	18,917.80	21,796.80	21,796.80	23,343.24	23,343.24	23,764.92	23,764.92
Forest Gate St Edmund		14,301.60	11,918.00	15,128.16	15,128.16	15,533.10	15,532.08	15,282.63	13,461.95	15,391.56	15,391.56	15,508.35	7,754.16	16,352.00	2,500.00	16,672.00	6,650.00	17,069.00	10,000.00
Forest Gate Emmanuel		18,086.30	18,086.30	18,736.80	18,736.80	19,816.83	19,816.80	19,105.08	19,105.08	18,915.00	18,915.00	18,253.62	18,253.68	18,178.44	18,178.44	18,680.28	18,680.28	18,232.80	18,232.80
Forest Gate St Mark		22,396.80	22,396.80	24,542.16	24,542.16	25,688.52	25,688.52	25,194.48	25,194.48	25,357.92	25,357.92	25,147.98	25,148.04	25,160.88	25,160.88	25,826.16	25,826.16	26,392.44	26,392.44
Forest Gate St Saviour		15,165.00	15,165.00	16,940.00	16,944.00	18,937.00	18,936.00	19,252.08	19,252.08	20,093.00	20,093.00	20,921.67	20,921.67	21,454.00	21,454.00	21,065.00	21,065.00	22,667.00	22,667.00
West Ham St Matthew		8,939.76	8,939.76	10,070.28	10,070.28	10,249.47	10,250.52	9,910.92	9,910.92	9,890.16	9,890.16	10,166.31	10,166.28	10,044.60	10,044.60	9,738.60	9,738.60	9,976.20	9,976.20
Manor Park St Barnabas		6,667.00	6,702.96	7,712.00	7,712.04	9,040.68	9,132.00	9,584.04	9,584.04	9,973.00	9,973.08	10,457.00	10,457.04	10,933.56	10,933.56	11,628.60	11,628.60	12,491.88	12,491.88
Manor Park St Michael		13,385.76	13,385.76	12,941.28	12,941.28	14,537.16	14,537.16	13,041.26	13,041.26	16,834.92	16,834.92	17,188.38	17,188.44	17,281.44	17,281.44	13,697.64	13,697.64	13,065.00	13,065.00
North Woolwich		2,511.60	2,511.60	2,896.80	2,896.80	3,408.57	3,408.60	3,449.16	3,449.16	3,679.80	3,679.80	3,902.58	3,252.20	4,121.40	4,121.40	4,436.16	4,436.16	4,708.44	4,708.44
Stratford St John		31,570.20	31,570.20	32,051.28	32,051.28	35,993.43	36,021.24	37,269.56	37,269.56	39,567.36	39,567.36	41,225.52	41,225.52	43,232.40	43,232.40	46,077.60	46,077.60	47,258.64	47,258.64
Stratford St James		3,537.24	3,537.24	4,040.16	4,040.16	4,500.48	4,500.48	4,701.48	4,701.48	4,925.28	4,925.28	5,112.36	5,112.36	5,392.56	5,392.56	5,771.76	5,771.76	5,844.00	5,844.00
Stratford St Paul		9,674.00	10,000.00	10,791.00	5,400.00	10,998.00	10,998.00	10,204.00	10,204.00	9,860.00	9,860.00	9,595.00	4,000.00	9,421.00	5,436.00	5,779.00	5,779.00	5,665.00	5,665.60
Victoria Docks																			
Ascension		9,678.00	9,678.00	11,782.00	11,132.00	11,245.00	11,245.00	10,991.00	11,470.00	11,470.00	11,450.00	5,986.00	5,986.00	10,466.00	10,466.00	12,341.34	12,341.34	12,451.20	12,451.20
Victoria Docks St Luke		8,562.00	8,562.00	8,593.20	8,593.20	10,268.28	10,268.28	11,069.16	11,069.16	11,710.68	11,710.68	12,671.01	12,671.04	13,295.76	13,295.76	14,500.56	14,500.56	14,633.16	15,133.16
West Ham		24,201.40	24,201.40	25,982.00	2,125.12	26,673.00	10,000.00	28,863.00	15,000.00	28,281.00	16,000.00	23,555.00	17,000.00	28,940.00	28,940.00	30,251.00	25,000.00	29,656.00	29,656.00
Becton St Marks		11,516.68	11,516.68	13,037.28	13,037.28	15,375.69	14,094.41	16,299.00	16,808.42	13,258.38	13,258.38	17,557.65	17,557.68	18,104.16	18,104.16	18,783.24	18,783.24	18,676.32	18,676.32
Deanery Fund																			
DEANERY TOTAL		310,424.46	310,540.82	338,888.00	308,753.12	361,212.46	343,377.33	360,704.74	346,335.82	363,549.06	323,310.20	366,795.92	323,474.79	383,424.16	365,587.20	391,848.14	376,575.14	396,396.36	366,533.96
											40,238.86		43,321.13		17,836.96		15,273.00		29,862.40
														West Ham St Pauls	8,940.00 3,636.00			After date St Edmunds Rolled into 2011	(875.00)
			% paid 100.04		% Paid 91.11		% Paid 95.06		%Paid 100		% Paid 88.93		% Paid 88.19		% Paid 95.35		% Paid 96.10		% Paid 92.47

Appendix 4

HAVERING DEANERY SHARE

	2002		2003		2004		2005		2006		2007		2008		2009		2010		
	Assessed	Total Paid	Assessed	Total Paid	Assessed	Total Paid	Assessed	Total Paid	Assessed	Total Paid	Assessed	Total Paid	Assessed	Total Paid	Assessed	Total Paid	Assessed	Total Paid	
Cranham All Saints	27,000.00	27,000.00	28,205.00	28,205.00	33,132.00	33,132.00	38,285.00	38,285.00	40,973.00	40,973.00	42,754.00	42,754.00	11,028.00	11,028.00	36,527.00	36,527.00	37,311.12	37,311.12	
Cranham Park	105,400.00	105,400.00	110,508.72	110,508.72	110,833.44	110,833.44	98,783.22	98,783.22	96,525.00	96,525.00	71,390.88	71,390.89	75,750.84	75,750.84	81,252.24	81,252.24	121,601.00	99,407.00	
Gidea Park St Michaels	41,283.00	41,283.00	39,001.08	39,001.08	44,286.66	44,286.66	46,019.16	46,019.16	48,946.56	48,946.56	49,426.71	49,426.71	52,232.40	52,232.40	54,174.84	54,174.84	55,248.96	55,248.96	
Harold Hill St George	18,700.00	18,700.00	14,805.00	14,805.00	18,811.00	19,999.00	26,196.75	15,500.00	30,223.00	18,000.00	28,249.00	27,548.00	29,113.00	22,000.00	29,840.00	27,000.00	30,856.00	14,000.00	
Harold Hill St Paul	10,000.00	10,000.00	13,667.00	10,667.00	15,140.00	7,800.00	19,505.00	12,800.00	23,751.00	14,060.00	16,722.00	16,722.00	18,594.00	18,588.91	18,343.00	18,343.00	19,390.00	19,390.00	
Harold Wood St Peter	120,000.00	120,000.00	118,421.00	100,400.00	115,244.00	106,000.00	99,472.00	99,472.00	102,989.00	111,989.00	109,675.00	109,675.00	117,782.00	117,782.00	119,265.00	119,265.00	125,539.00	125,539.00	
Hornchurch St Andrew	126,225.00	126,225.00	124,955.00	124,955.00	129,721.68	129,876.70	124,813.32	124,813.32	135,787.44	135,787.44	146,558.61	146,558.61	156,795.24	156,795.24	166,490.00	158,000.00	172,122.00	157,980.00	
Hornchurch Holy Cross	24,000.00	24,200.00	30,308.00	20,000.00	35,016.00	26,914.00	37,011.00	28,000.00	38,048.00	32,000.00	37,030.00	33,000.00	36,116.00	34,000.00	39,358.00	24,000.00	41,512.00	41,512.00	
Hornchurch St Nicholas	17,280.00	17,280.00	21,490.00	21,490.00	25,975.00	18,675.50	34,379.00	22,142.00	36,387.00	27,000.00	31,967.00	23,000.00	29,891.00	29,891.00	28,864.00	26,000.00	27,471.00	27,471.00	
Squirrel's Heath	30,103.72	30,103.72	28,064.00	28,064.00	32,816.09	32,817.00	38,190.04	38,190.04	40,569.24	40,569.24	42,657.15	42,657.15	43,952.04	37,510.00	45,250.00	39,120.00	45,097.00	39,120.00	
North Ockendon	17,495.00	10,995.00	13,474.00	13,474.00	9,902.97	9,903.00	7,726.92	7,726.92	8,596.20	8,596.20	9,136.71	9,141.43	9,587.16	9,587.16	9,681.24	9,681.24	9,930.72	9,930.72	
Rainham	45,200.00	30,000.00	43,877.00	35,000.00	42,654.00	35,000.00	58,408.50	36,000.00	39,034.68	39,034.68	39,456.00	32,417.45	42,482.80	32,500.00	44,343.00	36,500.00	45,405.36	45,405.36	
Wennington	5,500.00	5,730.00	5,280.00	5,280.00	6,434.00	5,280.00	5,280.00	4,840.00	4,800.00	4,880.00	5,250.00	4,800.00	5,498.20	5,000.00	6,047.00	5,000.00	6,254.00	6,254.00	
South Hornchurch	34,135.00	34,135.00	26,474.00	26,474.00	31,298.00	31,298.00	42,578.00	42,578.00	51,186.00	51,186.00	53,000.00	53,000.00	50,616.00	50,616.00	49,646.52	49,646.52	48,347.64	48,347.64	
Collier Row Ascension	15,000.00	6,500.00	23,548.00	3,000.00	27,706.00	15,000.00	36,517.50	8,500.00	34,851.00	17,000.00	19,028.00	19,028.00	19,613.00	19,613.00	20,381.00	20,327.00	20,354.00	15,300.00	
The Good Shepherd	52,420.00	52,428.00	50,852.00	50,856.00	58,551.57	58,551.60	72,958.08	72,958.08	78,841.68	78,841.68	67,320.00	67,320.02	67,502.16	67,502.16	67,190.28	67,190.28	66,975.48	66,975.48	
Collier Row St James	21,000.00	19,000.00	20,630.00	11,000.00	14,057.00	12,000.00	12,815.25	12,000.00	13,820.00	12,000.00	16,098.00	16,359.00	16,494.00	16,494.00	14,000.00	14,000.00	14,986.00	14,986.00	
Havering Atte Bower	41,000.00	33,000.00	40,950.00	31,000.00	36,314.00	31,000.00	34,003.00	31,000.00	33,395.00	29,000.00	32,549.00	21,000.00	32,943.00	28,000.00	34,726.00	34,726.00	34,000.00	34,000.00	
Romford St Alban	13,220.00	13,220.00	12,361.00	12,361.00	14,793.00	14,793.00	19,442.00	19,442.00	22,705.00	22,705.00	24,604.00	24,604.00	26,119.00	26,119.00	26,781.00	26,781.00	27,901.00	27,901.00	
Romford St Andrew	14,000.00	14,000.00	18,841.00	18,841.00	21,995.00	21,995.00	29,725.50	18,000.00	32,190.00	22,000.00	31,595.00	28,000.00	32,206.00	18,000.00	33,685.00	26,000.00	35,314.00	30,000.00	
Romford St Augustine	15,730.00	15,730.00	18,532.00	18,532.00	21,153.00	21,153.00	29,915.00	25,000.00	32,418.00	29,418.00	31,926.00	31,926.00	31,690.00	31,690.00	30,172.00	30,172.00	29,393.10	29,393.10	
Romford St Edward	46,000.00	46,000.00	91,382.00	50,000.00	90,955.00	50,000.00	85,283.00	47,000.00	87,538.00	55,000.00	84,470.00	70,800.00	88,479.00	88,479.00	86,730.00	86,730.00	89,819.00	89,819.00	
Romford St John	6,000.00	7,000.00	10,698.00	8,000.00	10,875.00	9,000.00	16,302.75	11,000.00	16,965.00	12,000.00	17,576.00	16,000.00	17,931.00	11,000.00	18,130.00	12,978.10	(121.00)	0.00	
Upminster	49,500.00	52,000.00	49,839.00	49,839.00	51,436.44	51,960.00	49,573.26	50,074.00	53,420.00	53,448.00	56,132.01	56,698.96	61,669.00	61,668.96	65,511.00	65,511.00	68,178.36	70,678.36	
Deanery Fund							(372.00)				(150.00)	0.00							
Special reduction											93,752.00	0.00							
DEANERY TOTAL	896,191.72	859,929.72	956,162.80	831,752.80	999,100.85	897,267.90	1,062,811.25	910,123.74	1,103,959.80	1,000,959.80	1,158,173.07	1,013,827.22	1,074,084.84	1,021,847.67	1,126,388.12	1,068,925.22	1,172,885.74	1,105,969.74	
	Not paid	#####	Not paid	124,410.00	Not paid	101,832.95	Not paid	152,687.51	Not paid	103,000.00	Not paid	Unauthorised	144,345.85	Not paid	52,237.17	Not paid	57,462.90	Not paid	66,916.00
								4,000.00											
Paid After Date								1,000.00					27,754.00				24.00	After date	
									St Paul	2,689.00								St Andrews	(20.00)
													2,000.00	Carnham	(16,726.00)		Ascension	3,000.00	
													(1,000.00)	Wennington	200		Cranham St luke	9,407.00	
	% Paid							% Paid									% Paid		
	95.95			% Paid 86.99		% Paid 89.81		85.63		% Paid 90.67			% Paid 87.54			% Paid 94.90		% Paid 94.29	

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